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Harold M. Hays

Unreading the Pyramids

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Unreading the Pyramids

HAROLD M. HAYS

I. The Symbolic Meaning of the Tomb

It is certainly the case that the ancient Egyptians conceptualized architectural space in symbolic terms, for they themselves make explicit identifications of this kind. An example may be perceived in a New Kingdom rite of the Opening of the Mouth dealing with the depositing of the corpse in its resting place.[1] There, the deceased is told that 'your father Osiris has placed you in his embrace in his name of "Akhet (*ꜣḫt*)"'.[2] Through the liturgy's 'sacramental exegesis',[3] the place of interment is made equivalent to the person of the god Osiris, who in turn is equivalent to the Akhet. The cosmographic term *ꜣḫt* originally indicated the place from which the obscured sun rises;[4] by extension it means the site where the deceased becomes an Akh (*ꜣḫ*). Thus the import of the formulation is clear: a physical structure serves not merely the practical purpose of housing the corpse but is also conceptualized as the place where the hidden deceased becomes effective after rebirth.

But the Egyptians gave other symbolic meanings to the tomb. The Duat (*dwꜣt*) is of comparable cosmographic importance. It already designates at its earliest attestations a celestial region prior to the Akhet in the deceased's progress toward rebirth in the eastern, morning

My many thanks to M. Conde for references and discussion of this essay.

1 The rites dealing with interment are MÖR 73-74, for which see E. Otto, *Das ägyptische Mundöffnungsritual*, *ÄA* 3, 1960. Cf. H. Roeder, *Mit dem Auge sehen. Studien zur Semantik der Herrschaft in den Toten- und Kulttexten*, Heidelberg, 1996, p. 229-232, where the (pictorial) imagery is interpreted at face value to indicate the introduction of a statue to a naos. But where the rites are performed on a mummy, it necessarily follows that it is actually a matter of the tomb. For the tomb as Akhet, see also below at n. 8.

2 MÖR 74B d-e (TT 100). On this statement, see further below at n. 54.

3 For the term *sakramentale* ***Ausdeutung***, see J. Assmann, "Die Verborgenheit des Mythos in Ägypten", *GM* 25, 1977, p. 15-25.

4 Later also the one in which it sets; see K. Jansen-Winkeln, "'Horizont' und 'Verklärtheit': Zur Bedeutung der Wurzel *ꜣḫ*", *SAK* 23, 1996, p. 203-205.

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sky.[5] The association of this word with the tomb[6] was evidently so deep that, by Ramesside times, it could be employed in a secular context as a purely physical reference to the innermost crypt.[7] In more exalted contexts, *dwꜣt* is found together with *ꜣḫt* and still other terms in indicating the final destination of the funeral procession on the day of burial. To take the mummy to the tomb was "to proceed safely up to the sky (*pt*), to the Akhet, to the Marsh of Reeds (*sḫt jꜣrw*), to the Duat".[8] The tomb was all of these four places. And it was more: there are still other symbolic identifications for the tombs of elites[9] and still other, entirely different designations for the components of New Kingdom royal tombs.[10]

Inasmuch as a single entity is attributed multiple, separate predicates of the same order, the multiplicity of terminology may be viewed as a manifestation of the phenomenon of "multiplicity of approaches".[11] The impulse was to superimpose layer upon layer of symbology—not, like the Neoplatonist Proclus struggling against the moribundity of paganism in late antiquity,[12] to declare theology in the form of a logically consistent, systematic treatise. It was not to produce objective descriptions of a static world in encoded discourse, but was to bring about change within the world by means of symbols. And the multivalence of true symbols—metaphors as opposed to codes—itself invites the addition of further meanings.[13]

5 As shown by J.P. Allen, *Genesis in Egypt. The Philosophy of Ancient Egyptian Creation Accounts*, *YES* 2, 1988, p. 6-7 and 56-57; *id.*, "The Cosmology of the Pyramid Texts", in W.K. Simpson (ed.), *Religion and Philosophy in Ancient Egypt*, *YES* 3, 1989, p. 21-25: already in Pyramid Texts the Duat refers ambivalently to a portion of the sky from which the sun is born, and on the other hand a region below the earth and commensurate with the earth. See also N. Beaux, "La *douat* dans les *Textes des Pyramides*. Espace et temps de gestation", *BIFAO* 94, 1994, p. 1-6; S. Bickel, "Die Jenseitsfahrt des Re nach Zeugen der Sargtexte", in A. Brodbeck (ed.), *Ein ägyptisches Glasperlenspiel*, *Ägyptologische Beiträge für Erik Hornung aus seinem Schülerkreis*, Berlin, 1998, p. 55-56.

6 For references to the general idea of the tomb as the Duat, see H. Milde, "'Going out into Day': Ancient Egyptian Beliefs and Practices concerning Death" in J.M. Bremer *et al.* (eds.), *Hidden Futures. Death and Immortality in Ancient Egypt, Anatolia, the Classical, Biblical and Arabic-Islamic World*, *Symposium, University of Amsterdam, December 1992*, Amsterdam, 1994, p. 23 n. 22.

7 As in the record of interrogations in connection with tomb robberies pLeopold-Amherst 2, 8; see J. Capart *et al.*, "New Light on the Ramesside Tomb-Robberies", *JEA* 22, 1936, p. 178, where it is asserted that the text's *tꜣy=f dwꜣt* "must be a general designation of the lower parts of the tomb where the king lay buried", as opposed to "a name for the sloping passage or vertical shaft leading thither".

8 A.H. Gardiner, N. de G. Davies, *The Tomb of Amenemhet (No. 82)*, *TTS* 1, 1915, pl. 11. Cf. the simpler caption "making the god ascend to his Akhet" labelling the same scene at N. de G. Davies, *The Tomb of Rekh-mi-Rēʿ at Thebes*, 2, *MMAEE* 11, 1943, pl. 93 (TT 100).

9 For instance, "pure place (*wʿbt*)" (see A.H. Gardiner, *The Admonitions of an Egyptian Sage*, Leipzig, 1909, p. 26), in an allusion to the place of embalming; and "temple (*ḫwt-nṯr*)" and "white shrine (*ʿḥ-ḥḍ*)" at MÖR 74C, a (TT 33).

10 See the summary at R.J. Demarée, "'Royal Riddles"', in R.J. Demarée, A. Egberts (eds.), *Village Voices*, *Proceedings of the Symposium "Texts from Deir el-Medîna and Their Interpretation", Leiden, May 31 - June 1, 1991*, Leiden, 1992, p. 16-18 Figs. 1 and 2, with further references at S. Demichelis, "Le project initial de la tombe de Ramsès IV?", *ZÄS* 131, 2004, p. 115 n. 11; my many thanks to B.J.J. Haring for the latter citation.

11 For a summary of the multiplicity thesis, its antithesis, and a synthesis, see H. Sternberg, *Mythische Motive und Mythenbildung in den ägyptischen Tempeln und Papyri der griechisch-römischen Zeit*, *GOF* IV. 14, 1985, p. 1-9, though the summary is itself expressed as a controversy over logical versus pre-logical thought. In the present post-colonial age, orientalizing worries of this kind seem a throwback to the era of E.A. Wallis Budge; cf. M. Bernal, *Black Athena*, *The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization,* 1, New Brunswick, 1987, p. 261.

12 His combativeness and motivation being characterizations of J. Walbridge, "Explaining away the Greek Gods in Islam", *Journal of the History of Ideas* 59, 1998, p. 390.

13 On the difference between the metaphors and codes, see I. Scheffler, *Symbolic Worlds. Art, Science, Language, Ritual*, Cambridge, 1997, p. 72. On the productive character of symbols, see B. Goff, *Symbols of Ancient Egypt in the Late Period: The Twenty-First Dynasty*, The Hague, 1979, p. 157; M. Eliade, *Images and Symbols: Studies in Religious Symbolism*, Kansas City, 1961, p. 15; M. Hénaff, *Claude Lévi-Strauss and the Making of Structural Anthropology*, Minneapolis, 1998, p. 169-170; J. Culler, *Structuralist Poetics*, Ithaca, 1975, p. 20, etc.

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It is not necessary to suppose that the Egyptian mentality was particularly susceptible to logical inconsistency. Rather, the accretion of seemingly contradictory ideas may be seen as inevitable to any discursive body to which multiple authors contribute over time—metaphorically motivated or otherwise. Such contradictions as may be seen, in short, are a product not of a 'pre-rational' intellect, but of the complexity of the discursive body's generating source: the growing body of mortuary literature was fusing together diverse metaphors from originally separate "micro-systems of belief", to borrow the phraseology of Donald B. Redford.[14] When the layers of terminology are taken together, they can generate logical contradictions which serve as an engine by which human logic is transcended.

What has been observed so far for New Kingdom sources applies also to the Old Kingdom, though from that period come fewer pieces of direct evidence for the symbolic meanings of the tomb. The best known[15] locus involves the celestial identity of portions of a pyramid's burial apartments. The passage in question is of paramount importance, for the statements are the nearest to any explicit dogma[16] to be found in the Pyramid Texts concerning their symbolic meaning:

> *… as you are given to your mother Nut in her name of sarcophagus (qrswt/ḏrwt);*
> *she has drawn you together in her name of 'burial chambers (qrsw),*
> *as you are made to rise up to her in her name of 'tomb (jʿ).*[17]

As the passage differentiates the parts of the tomb but identifies each of them as the same person, one encounters a deliberate violation of logic. Indeed, the affective power of the passage depends upon the reader's active involvement to overcome its contradictions at the literal level: its sense of mystery is propelled in part by the problem it poses.[18] It is not a naming of the parts of the goddess's body; it is the identification of different roles she simultaneously takes. Taken together literally, Nut as tomb encloses herself as sarcophagus. Less literally, the identities combine to transcend a more transparent and mundane manner of expressing human experience: all of the burial area was the sky goddess without qualifying limitation. Separately and collectively, every part of the tomb was the sky.

14 D.B. Redford, "The Concept of Kingship during the Eighteenth Dynasty", in D. O'Connor, D.P. Silverman (eds.), *Ancient Egyptian Kingship*, *PÄ* 9, 1995, p. 162.

15 Cf. R.T. Rundle Clark, *Myth and Symbol in Ancient Egypt*, London, 1978, p. 48-50; I.E.S. Edwards, "Do the Pyramid Texts Suggest an Explanation for the Abandonment of the Subterranean Chamber of the Great Pyramid?", in C. Berger *et al.* (eds.), *Hommages à Jean Leclant*, *BdE* 106/1, 1994, p. 162-163; Allen, "Cosmology", p. 16-17; J.P. Allen, "Reading a Pyramid", in Berger *et al.* (eds.), *op. cit.*, I, p. 25 n. 35.

16 Cf. S. Schott, "Bemerkungen zum ägyptischen Pyramidenkult", *BÄBA* 5, 1950, p. 151, where the less transparent PT 587 §1605, is cited to establish an identity between Nut and the pyramid.

17 PT 364 §616d-f (TM). J.P. Allen, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, *Writings from the Ancient World* 23, 2005, p. 80, translates *qrswt/ḏrwt*, *qrsw,* and *jʿ* respectively as "burial place", "burial chamber", and "tomb's superstructure"; the uncertainty of meaning is underscored by the different translations for these words at Allen, 'Cosmology', p. 17. Contra the quoted renderings, J. Cervelló-Autori, "Les déterminatifs d'édifices funéraires royaux dans les *Textes des Pyramides* et leur signification sémantique, rituelle et historique", *BIFAO* 106, 2006, p. 6 and 12-13, indicates that both *qrswt* and *qrsw* can indicate "sarcophagi" (however, cf. G. Lapp, *Die Opferformel des Alten Reiches*, *SDAIK* 21, 1986, §62) and for this passage translates the first as such, while the latter two are respectively rendered "mastaba chtonien" and "mastaba ascensionnel". On the meaning of the sarcophagus, see in this context also M. Baud, *Famille royale et pouvoir sous l'Ancien Empire égyptien*, *BdE* 126, 1999, p.329-330.

18 Cf. F. Schuon, *Gnosis: Divine Wisdom* (G.E.H. Palmer, trans.), Middlesex, 1990, p. 18.

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The doctrine of Nut's identity with the parts of the tomb is incompatible with the only other unequivocal, symbolic attribution of meaning to pyramid architecture. While the goddess Nut (the tomb, as we have seen) is the mother of the god Osiris (the corpse), and by biological connotation she may be understood as enclosing him and producing him (like a fetus in a womb, if you will), in fact the entire pyramid is said to be her son:[19]

O Horus, Osiris is Neferkare;
Osiris is this pyramid (mr) of Neferkare and this complex (kȝt) of his:
Osiris is this complex; Osiris is this pyramid.
Betake yourself to him;
do not be far from him in his name of "pyramid".[20]

If the two Pyramid Texts passages are taken together, a confluence of paradoxes emerges: as the pyramid complex in its entirety, the offspring Osiris (*mr*) encloses his mother Nut as sarcophagus (*qrswt*/*ḏrwt*). She in turn must enclose him as the corpse within. And therefore he encloses himself. The two passages employ different metaphors; as a result, taking them together generates a defiance of human, biological experience. The texts of the two passages are not differently coloured pieces of glass fitted together in a mosaic. Superimposed, they are opaque to human vision.

II. Multiple Identities versus Sequential Connectivity

These ancient statements establish in an unequivocal way that the Egyptians figured their mortuary architecture in symbolic terms.[21] They also demonstrate that this symbolism was not collectively configured throughout the corpus in a systematic fashion. Texts like the last two are best understood separately; they openly express their truth by metaphor, which lets even a

19 For non-textual interpretations of pyramid symbolism, see for example L. Speleers, "La signification des pyramides", in *Mélanges Maspero* 1,2, *MIFAO* 66, 1935/1938, p. 603 and 620-621 (the pyramidal form was purely the result of a long process of trial and error, in which there was no intent to express religious doctrine); A. Saleh, "The So-Called 'Primeval Hill' and Other Related Elevations in Ancient Egyptian Mythology", *MDAIK* 25, 1969, p. 112 with n. 2-3 (references to seminal suppositions that the pyramid derived from the Benben and/or the primeval mound); A. Rammant-Peeters, *Les pyramidions égyptiens du Nouvel Empire*, *OLA* 11, 1983, p. 190; similarly M. Lehner, *The Complete Pyramids*, London, 1997, p. 34 (the pyramid was inspired by the Benben, and was thematically solar); E. Hornung, *Einführung in die Ägyptologie*, Darmstadt, 1996, p. 139 (it is commonly held that the pyramid represented the primeval mound). On the meaning of the term *mr* in the late New Kingdom, see N. Grimal, "Le roi, les ennemis et la pyramide", in H. Guksch, D. Polz (eds.), *Stationen. Beiträge zur Kuturgeschichte Ägyptens*, *Rainer Stadelmann gewidmet, Mainz*, 1998, p. 264-271 (it indicates a funerary monument constructed to receive the deceased, the form of which is a means of acceding to new divinity).

20 PT 600 §1657a-d (N). On this passage, cf. W. Westendorf, "Pyramiden und Sonnenbahn", in B. Schmitz (ed.), *Festschrift Arne Eggebrecht zum 65. Geburtstag am 12. März 2000*, *HÄB* 48, 2002, p. 135.

21 So also for their temples, as is well known for the Greco-Roman period and noted at J. Assmann, *Ägypten—Theologie und Frömmigkeit einer frühen Hochkultur*, Stuttgart, 1991, p. 67; see more precisely on the temple of Edfu R. Finnestad, *Image of the World and Symbol of the Creator: On the Cosmological and Iconological Values of the Temple of Edfu*, *Studies in Oriental Religions* 10, 1985, p. 11 and 64-68. The temple is identified as the sky (*pt*) already in the New Kingdom in a dedicatory text at the small temple at Medinet Habu: "Hail to you, temple of Amun, Lord of the Thrones of the Two Lands, Nut the

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single concrete object (e.g. the pyramid of Merenre at Saqqara) get symbolized by two mutually exclusive predicates. As a common, systematic terminology is not maintained throughout all the texts, they cannot interact in the same way as chapters of a novel to develop a unified account around a central topic.

The conflicts between predicates are a fundamental argument against understanding the Pyramid Texts of any given pyramid as together *constituting* an ordered structure, cohering in a quasi-narrative sequence. They are not sequentially ordered, and they do not create a deictically linked discourse finishing with definitive closure, of which philosophical and narrative discourse are two prime examples. This is not at all to deny that the Pyramid Texts are *informed by* coherent, complex, and effectively systematic conceptions. Indeed, it is in light of such underlying conceptions that the texts become intelligible. Rather, it is to assert that the texts of any given pyramid do not all cohere collectively to form a linear composition with beginning, middle, and end.

III. Articulated Geographic and Cosmographic Meanings

The logical conflicts and non-systematic symbology are points strongly against reading any given pyramid's texts in quasi-narrative fashion. They are also points against the theory that the individual subterranean chambers of the pyramids represented or embodied differentiated portions of the cosmos.

It is important to establish this point strongly. In spite of the fact that Egyptian words for a pyramid's sarcophagus chamber, passageway, and antechamber are unknown, Egyptologists have long associated these rooms with more or less real geographic and cosmographic locales. The practice was inaugurated by Siegfried Schott,[22] who understood the sarcophagus chamber,

Great One, one high in the horizon"; see P. Barguet, "Le rituel archaïque de fondation des temples de Medinet-Habou et de Louxor", *RdE* 9, 1952, p. 6 and 17; (Barguet's interpretation of *nwt wrt* etc. as a coordinative genitive rather than appositive is incorrect). The temple is unequivocally identified as the Akhet in the New Kingdom; see the numerous citations at H. Brunner, "Die Sonnenbahn in ägyptischen Tempeln", in A. Kuschke, E. Kutsch (eds.), *Archäologie und Altes Testament. Festschift für Kurt Galling*, Tubingen, 1970, p. 31-33. For later usage of this term in this way, see F. Coppens, *The Wabet. Tradition and Innovation in Temples of the Ptolemaic and Roman Period*, Prague, 2007, p. 68-70, and see also J.-M. Kruchten, "Profane et sacré dans le temple égyptien. Interrogations et hypothèses à propos du rôle et du fonctionnement du temple égyptien", *BSEG* 21, 1997, p. 36. For a speculative comparison of the disposition of the Middle Kingdom Book of Two Ways to the plan of an archetypal Middle Kingdom temple, see P. Barguet, "Essai d'interprétation du Livre des Deux Chemins", *RdE* 21, 1969, p. 14-17. On the supposed "grammaire du temple", see the fundamental bibliography at É. van Essche-Merchez, "La syntaxe formelle des reliefs et de la grande inscription de l'an 8 de Ramsès III à Médinet Habou", *CdE* 67, 1992, p. 238, n. 1.

22 See Schott, *Bemerkungen zum ägyptischen Pyramidenkult,* p. 208-210 and fig. 56. Note that the correspondences between subterranean chambers and cities are less important to Schott than the assumption that the subterranean chambers and their texts correspond to the parts of the superstructure and the rites performed there; see *ibid.*, p. 152-153 for the fundamental connections that he supposes, as well as H. Ricke, *Bemerkungen zur ägyptischen Baukunst des Alten Reichs,* II, *BÄBA* 5, 1950, p.123-124 with fig. 49. As a result, in Schott's exposition there are precious few cosmographic correspondences to real world architecture; see *op. cit.*, p. 198-200 and 205 for above-ground correspondences to the door of Nut, the Marsh of Reeds, and Marsh of Offerings. But in his view only texts of the south wall of the sarcophagus chamber are "Sprüche zum Kult im Grabe", and in that capacity they are supposed to indicate associations between the subterranean rooms and the three geographic locales mentioned here.

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antechamber, and serdab as corresponding to the cities of Buto, Memphis, and Hierakonpolis respectively. The idea that these rooms were associated with cities was held also by Joachim Spiegel shortly thereafter, in 1955,[23] though with enormous differences.[24] More importantly, the latter went further, asserting also that "Die Sargkammer repräsentiert die Unterwelt [sc. *dwȝt*], die Mittelkammer [sc. antechamber] die Oberwelt («Horizont [sc. *ȝḫt*]»), ihre Decke den Nachthimmel, der Serdab den Tageshimmel (*qbḥw*)".[25] In a later work, Spiegel attenuated the prominence of the geographic associations[26] and emphasized the cosmographic ones,[27] clarifying the latter's significance as follows: "Der Grundgedanke der Raumsymbolik des Pyramiden-Inneren ist bereits durch die Tradition gegeben: Die Pyramide ist ein architektonisches Sinnbild des Kosmos".[28] In his opinion, all parts of the pyramid "in den Pyramidentexten nur mit mythischen Namen bezeichnet werden, die dieser ihrer Funktion Rechnung tragen".[29] But in neither work did Spiegel support the attributions with a properly formulated argument. In the former, his exegesis of the texts in Unis's pyramid is sprinkled with the unargued associations[30] prior to their summary cited above. In the later work an *a priori* summary of associations introduces[31] an expository interpretation of sections of texts in the pyramid of Unis, a discussion of the author's beliefs about the relationship between ritual and myth, and a text-by-text translation and exegesis of Unis's collection—in the course of which the attributions are exegetically applied, not defended or argued. Proposition is applied to evidence to yield meaning.

As it did not come equipped with a proper argument, it is possible that Spiegel's cosmographic theory would have faded from Egyptological discourse, as the strictly geographic one already has. But the theory was to find genuine vigor when it was embraced by James P. Allen some three and a half decades after its initial formulation and subsequent neglect.[32] It got its new credibility from the evidential support given it in portions of two seminal articles: "The Cosmology of the Pyramid Texts",[33] where a single page presents the cosmographic interpreta-

23 An earlier work, J. Spiegel, "Die religionsgeschichtliche Stellung der Pyramidentexte", *Or* 22, 1953, p. 129-157, criticized some features of Schott, *op. cit.*, while advancing a competing theory founded on the same premise, that the Pyramid Texts constituted a burial ritual.

24 J. Spiegel, "Das Auferstehungsritual der Unaspyramide", *ASAE* 53, 1955, p. 408: Qus and Buto both (sarcophagus chamber); Hermopolis and Heracleopolis (antechamber); and Heliopolis (serdab).

25 Spiegel, *loc. cit.*

26 See J. Spiegel, *Das Auferstehungsritual der Unas-Pyramide. Beschreibung und erläuterte Übersetzung*, *ÄA* 23, 1971, p. 34 and 231.

27 Thus they, and not the geographic associations, are placed on the plan of the chambers of Unis; see *ibid.*, fig. 2.

28 *Ibid.*, p. 21.

29 *Ibid.*, p. 25.

30 See Spiegel, "Das Auferstehungsritual der Unaspyramide", p. 367, where in reference to PT 220, the association of the antechamber with the Akhet is first introduced simply by saying "Als 'Horizont' ist in der Szenerie des Rituals die Mittelkammer bezeichnet"; p. 371, where in passing he speaks of the deceased going from "Sargkammer (Unterwelt)" to the "Mittelkammer (Oberwelt)"; and p. 374, where it announced that "In der mythischen Szenerie des Rituals gilt der Serdab als 'Himmel' (*qbḥw*)". See also *ibid.*, p. 375, 384, and 387, for similar *a priori* correspondences.

31 See Spiegel, *Das Auferstehungsritual der Unas-Pyramide*, p. 21-26; and see also p. 63-68.

32 Until Allen's revival of the theory, the only comment upon it by a scholar other than Spiegel is to be found at J. Osing, "Zur Disposition der Pyramidentexte des Unas", *MDAIK* 42, 1986, p. 143 n. 41: Concerning the tripartite cosmographic correspondence for the sarcophagus chamber, antechamber, and serdab, "Dem Befund der Texte entspricht eine solche Verteilung jedoch nicht. Der serdab ist ohnehin unbeschriftet, und auch sonst nimmt keiner von den Texten der Pyramide nachweisbar auf ihn Bezug".

33 Allen, "Cosmology", p. 25. Cf. also Allen, *Genesis in Egypt*, p. 6; J.P. Allen, "Pyramid Texts", in D.B. Redford (ed.), *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt*, 3, Oxford, 2001, p. 97.

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tion of burial chambers as a feature of the pyramids with texts, and five pages of "Reading a Pyramid",[34] where an identical interpretative schema is nominally restricted to that of Unis.

The influence of these two articles cannot be exaggerated. Since the appearance of "Reading a Pyramid", multiple studies have accepted its conclusions without reservation,[35] or sought to supplement it in respect to the pyramid of Unis,[36] or even to apply it to architectural space outside the subterranean chambers it treats.[37] Special mention may be made of Allen's recent translation volume of the Pyramid Texts. In it, the cosmographic correspondences emerge in the translation in the form of modern, paratextual headers. All of the pyramids get explanatory titles telling the cosmographic purposes of whole sections of texts. Thus there are "Spells for Emerging from the Duat", "Spells for Passing through the Akhet", "Spells for Leaving the Akhet", and "Spells for Entering the Sky".[38] In short, there is a growing body of literature around the theory, and the very meaning of the Pyramid Texts as a body of literature is conditioned by it. As the Pyramid Texts are of central importance to our knowledge of religion in the Old Kingdom, our ideas about them should be as clear and correct as possible. For this reason it is worth giving the theory a concentrated evaluation.

IV. Problems of Methodology and Approach

The theory is built out of a confluence of three factors: textual content, architectural space, and a processual organization of both. Content is held to correspond to space, and texts and space are arranged in conformity with the deceased's physical egress from the burial place. Thus the texts are "read in the order he would find them in moving from the sarcophagus out of the

34 Allen, "Reading a Pyramid", p. 24-28. See also, in the same volume, G. Englund, "La lumière et la répartition des textes dans la pyramide", in C. Berger *et al.* (eds.), *Hommages à Jean Leclant*, I, p. 169-180, based on a similar assumption—that "la disposition des textes sur les parois est en rapport avec le contenu des textes".

35 Most notably at Lehner, *The Complete Pyramids*, p. 33; Chr. Eyre, *The Cannibal Hymn. A Cultural and Literary Study*, Liverpool, 2002, p. 44-47; N. Billing, *Nut. The Goddess of Life in Text and Iconography*, *USE* 5, 2002, p. 43-45; *id.* "Text and Tomb: Some Spatial Properties of Nut in the Pyramid Texts", in Z. Hawass (ed.), *Egyptology at the Dawn of the Twenty-First Century*, Cairo, 2003, p. 129; *id.*, "The Corridor Chamber. An Investigation of the Function and Symbolism of an Architectural Element in the Old Kingdom Pyramids", in J.-Cl. Goyon, Chr. Cardin (eds.), *Proceedings of the Ninth International Congress of Egyptologists*, Leuven, 2007, p. 183-184; *id.*, "Re-Assessing the Past: Context and Tradition of the Book of the Dead, Chapter 181", in B. Backes *et al.* (eds.), *Totenbuch-Forschungen. Gesammelte Beiträge des 2. Internationalen Totenbuchs-Symposiums Bonn, 25. bis 29. September 2005*, Wiesbaden, 2006, p. 3-4; R. Leprohon, "Egyptian Religious Texts", in R.H. Wilkinson (ed.), *Egyptology Today*, Cambridge, 2008, p. 242.

36 At B. Mathieu, "La signification du serdab dans la pyramide d'Ounas. L'architecture des appartements funéraires royaux à la lumière des *Textes des Pyramides*", in C. Berger, B. Mathieu (eds.), *Études sur l'Ancien Empire et la nécropole de Saqqâra dédiées à Jean-Philippe Lauer*, *OrMonsp* 9, 1996, p. 289-304; *id.*, "Que sont les *Textes des Pyramides*?", *Égypte, Afrique et Orient* 12, 1999, p. 17, fig. 3; A. De Trafford, "The Palace Façade Motif and the Pyramid Texts as Cosmic Boundaries in Unis's Pyramid Chambers", *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 17.3, 2007, p. 271-283.

37 As at D. O'Connor, "The Interpretation of the Old Kingdom Pyramid Complex", in Guksch, Polz (eds.), *Stationen. Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte Ägyptens*, p. 135-144; D. Vischak, "Common Ground between Pyramid Texts and Old Kingdom Tomb Design: The Case of Ankhmahor", *JARCE* 60, 2003, p. 133-157; *id.*, "Agency in Old Kingdom Elite Tomb Programs: Traditions, Locations, and Variable Meanings", in M. Fitzenreiter, M. Herb (eds.), *Dekorietre Grabanlagen im Alten Reich*, *IBAES* 6, 2006, p. 258-259.

38 See Allen, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, p. 8-12 and *passim*.

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tomb".[39] For each royal pyramid, this means first the sarcophagus chamber walls, then those of the passageway, and then the antechamber walls before proceeding to the corridor and out. Together, the correspondence and arrangement articulate a systematic, cosmographic meaning which "is reflected not only in the texts and their layout but also in the substructure of the pyramid itself".[40] Figure 1 displays the principal identities. The sarcophagus chamber is the Duat, the antechamber is the Akhet, and the corridor leading from the antechamber is the route to the sky proper. Additionally, as graphically indicated in the figure, doors are to be found at the corridor and at the passageway between sarcophagus chamber and antechamber.

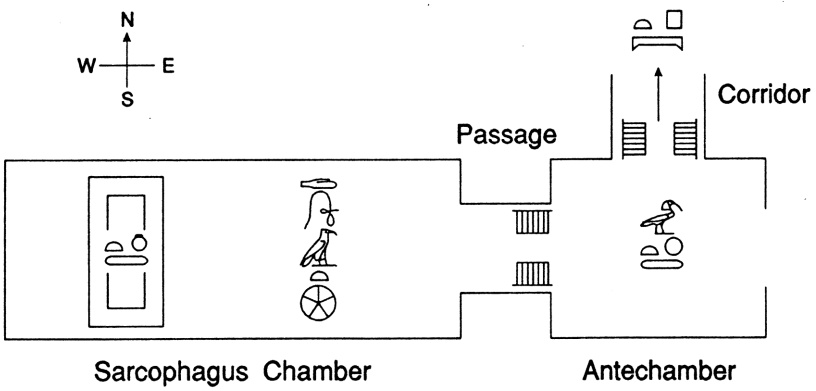

FIG. 1. The Supposed Cosmography of the Subterranean Chambers (Allen, "Reading a Pyramid", p. 24, fig. 5).

The anti-systematic character of Egyptian symbolism found in the Pyramid Texts as a whole is already an argument against this theory. Other methodological objections can be levelled against it. Chief of these is its narrowly semiological angle: the pyramid's subterranean space is deemed to represent or constitute an articulated symbolic meaning, but there is no consideration of how architectural space structures society.[41] The theory treats the architecture as an interpretable artefact of significance strictly to the king departing his sarcophagus. But equally relevant is how the tomb would have been used by people in introducing the mummy and

39 ALLEN, "Reading a Pyramid", p. 24. Actually, this statement cannot be made to apply to the pyramids of Teti and Pepi I; see below at n. 111.

40 *Loc. cit.*

41 Cf. the critique of semiological approaches to the interpretation of architecture at B. HILLIER, J. HANSON, *The Social Logic of Space*, Cambridge, 1988, p. 8-9. Contrast the semiological approach discussed at C. REICHE, "'Ein Welt aus Stein, Bild und Wort'. Bild und Text als Medien des monumentalen Diskurses im Alten Ägypten", in D. Bröckelmann, A. Klug (eds.), *In Pharaos Staat. Festschrift für Rolf Gundlach zum 75. Geburtstag*, Wiesbaden, 2005, p. 175 with n. 103, and see U. ECO, *A Theory of Semiotics*, Bloomington, 1979, p. 308 at n. 37, for the assumption that architectural elements perform two functions: their primary being to denote physical activity appropriate to space, with their secondary being to connote meanings of a more rarefied order, including symbolic ones. Cf. the structural analysis of architecture performed by R. TEFNIN, "Lecture d'un espace architectural. Un fragment du temple d'Hatshepsut à Deir el-Bahari", *CdE* 60, 1985, p. 303-321, which analysis is distinguished from, and taken to be a necessary preliminary to, the analysis of architecture's referential content.

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grave goods, and how it practically served as a permanent container for the same: the architecture's functional impact on society is lost. Another problem with this approach: it does not consider the structural parallels between the internal plans of the pyramids preceding those with texts. With comparatively few exceptions, back into the Fourth Dynasty all pyramids possess architectonic correlates to the sarcophagus chamber, passageway, antechamber, and corridor,[42] and thus the influence of ineffable tradition as a factor motivating the organization of space is not considered. A further methodological problem: the theory fails to account for the fact that the pyramids of queens—above all those with Pyramid Texts[43]—and those of later kings from Ibi into the Middle Kingdom, each had a burial compartment with but a single chamber. Did the simplified space represent the Duat, Akhet, both, or neither?

V. The Argument and Supports for the Cosmographic Theory

But these issues of methodology and approach are none of them certain proof against the theory's assertions. For this, one must know the basis for the theory—facts and interpretation—and then see that other evidence contradicts it. To that end, the present section reproduces in detail the argument and pertinent supports for "Reading a Pyramid" and "Cosmology" as representative of the theory's basis. In the section thereafter, the Pyramid Texts evidence refuting these details is given.

A. *Sarcophagus Chamber = Duat*[44]

1. A Commutative Association between the King, Osiris, and the Duat.

a. The offering ritual on the north wall of the sarcophagus chamber refers to the deceased as 'Osiris Unis', and texts of the series PT 213-222, found on the sarcophagus chamber south wall, equate "the king with Osiris (e.g. PT 219)", specifically §193.

b. Osiris is associated with the Duat at PT 262 §331, PT 466 §882c, and PT 577 §1525-27a.[45]

c. Summary: In the sarcophagus chamber, the king is identified as Osiris, and Osiris is associated with the Duat. Therefore, in the sarcophagus chamber, the king is in the Duat.

42 As can be shown via the comparative method illustrated at W. Schenkel, "Architektonische Struktur versus kultische Funktion: Zur Analyse altägyptischer Architektur", *GM* 39, 1980, p. 89-103; on this methodology, see also J. Brinks, "Mastaba und Pyramidentempel – Ein struktureller Vergleich", *GM* 39, 1980, p. 45-46; P. Elsner, *Die Typologie der Felsgräber. Strukturanalytische Untersuchung altägyptischer Grabarchitektur*, Frankfurt am Main, 2000, p. 24-27. This procedure, which may be ultimately owed to H. Ricke, consists of the structural segmentation of architectural elements and their functional classification, all on the basis of the comparison of different edifices built for the same purpose.

43 Cf. A. Labrousse, "L'architecture des pyramides de reines à la fin de la VIe dynastie", in L. Pantalacci, C. Berger-el-Naggar (eds.), *Des Néferkarê aux Montouhotep. Travaux archéologiques en cours sur la fin de la VIe dynastie et la Première Période Intermédiate*, *TMO* 40, 2005, p. 206-207 (antechamber fused with sarcophagus chamber, flanked by an undivided, non-tripartite serdab); for a collective plan of the subsidiary pyramids around Pepi I, see now C. Berger-el Naggar, M.-N. Fraisse, "Béhénou, «aimée de Pépy», une nouvelle reine d'Égypte", *BIFAO* 108, 2008, p. 8, fig. 1.

44 See Allen, "Reading a Pyramid", p. 24-26 with n. 34; *id*, "Cosmology", p. 25.

45 A further association appears at PT 10 §8d (M/S/W): "the Osiris, Lord of the Duat, Nemtiemzaf Merenre".

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2. The apotropaic texts on the west wall of the sarcophagus chamber serve "on the one hand, to protect the king's body from harm; on the other, they protect Osiris from the dangers of the Duat", with the latter purpose being "reflected in the MK title of the sequence [of apotropaic texts] (*r n ḫsf rrk*)".

3. In the pyramid of Unis, reference to emergence from the Duat is made in the first spell of the antechamber, west wall (PT 247 §257c) and in a text on the same room's south wall (PT 262 §§335a-336a): the first through explicitly speaking of going out (*prj*) from the Duat and the second through speaking of a transfer from the night-bark to the day-bark. With the second, a passage from the New Kingdom Book of Night is invoked to connect this act with *prj m dwꜣt*.[46]

B. *Antechamber = Akhet*[47]

1. In the passageway between sarcophagus chamber and antechamber in the pyramid of Unis, PT 246 §255a "urges the king 'to stand at the door of the Akhet'".

2. The passageways of the pyramids of Teti, Pepi I, and Pepi II are "devoted to spells of passage through the marshland at the western edge of the Akhet".[48] The reference accompanying this assertion makes it clear that the transition is specifically supposed to be "from the Field of Reeds [*sḫt jꜣrw*] to the *ꜣḫt*".[49] Since the *sḫt jꜣrw*, elsewhere rendered as "Marsh of Reeds",[50] is positioned after the Duat,[51] it must lie between it and the Akhet, just as the passageway lies between the sarcophagus chamber and antechamber. The texts identified as being devoted to passage through this marsh are PT 262, 264, 272, 359-363, 462-464, 587, and 673-677.

3. Also, it is remarked that "[i]n the antechamber the king 'becomes *akh* in the Akhet' (Pyr. 350c)".

C. *Corridor = Exit to Sky*[52]

1. One of the last texts of Unis's antechamber, PT 311 on that room's north wall, "speaks of opening 'the door of the Akhet for the emergence of the day-bark' (Pyr. 496a)". Architecturally, this door "corresponds to the door from the antechamber to the corridor".

2. The first spell of Unis's corridor, PT 313, positions the king at this door.

3. Finally, PT 301 §455b and PT 260 §318c respectively speak of *prj m ꜣḫt* "going out from the Akhet" and *prj m ḥrw pn m jrw mꜣꜥ n ꜣḫ ꜥnḫ* "going out on this day in the true form of a living Akh". This is the ultimate goal of the deceased, later reflected in the Book of the Dead's ancient title.

The theory is attractive since the texts of a pyramid are interpreted as working together as a coherent whole, rather than as a disparate mass of tangentially related material. Since they

46 On this passage, see now G. Roulin, *Le Livre de la Nuit*, *OBO* 147/1, 1996, p. 342-343.

47 See Allen, "Reading a Pyramid", p. 26-27, and *id.*, "Cosmology", p. 25.

48 Allen, "Reading a Pyramid", p. 27.

49 Allen, "Cosmology", p. 19, with this page specifically cited at *id.*, "Reading a Pyramid", p. 27 n. 45.

50 As at Allen, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, p. 436.

51 See Allen, "Cosmology", p. 23.

52 See Allen, "Reading a Pyramid", p. 27-28; *id.*, "Cosmology", p. 25.

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develop a process—namely, the deceased's passage toward the afterlife—they are seen to collectively possess a beginning, middle, and end. The temporal component and their coherence around a series of progressively related actions give the texts a kind of quasi-narrative structure, and in this manner they are rendered more intelligible to a modern audience. Along the way, proximate texts pinpoint the symbolic meaning of the major spaces of a pyramid's subterranean architecture. Though the pyramid of Unis forms the chief source of supports, evidence is drawn from later pyramids and elsewhere to establish an interpretive theory which is held to apply to all of them. Altogether, the citations seem to compel belief.

VI. The Evidence against the Cosmographic Theory

But there are many more facts in conflict with the theory than those advanced in support of it.

A. *Sarcophagus Chamber ≠ Duat*

1. Osiris is not merely associated with the Duat. As the reader may have already noted, the Opening of the Mouth passage cited at the beginning of this essay identifies him as the Akhet.[53] That passage's phraseology is derived virtually verbatim from the Pyramid Texts,[54] where it appears in three texts specifically addressed to the deceased as "Osiris NN". In one of them he is told, "it is Akh for Horus with you, in your name of 'Akhet from which Re goes forth'".[55] The deceased is Osiris, and his name is Akhet. To employ the same commutative reasoning as the cosmographic theory does, the sarcophagus chamber must represent the Akhet as much as it does the Duat.

2. Conversely, if apotropaic texts were concerned with protecting the king's body and Osiris in the Duat, then this would mean that the antechamber is also the Duat, for all pyramids (including Unis's) situate such texts on the east wall of the antechamber.[56]

However, the title advanced to support the claim of protection in the Duat was not cited in full. It is not "utterance of warding off the Rerek-serpent (sc. in the Duat)", but rather *r3 n ḫsf n rrk m ḫrt-nṯr* "utterance of warding off the Rerek-serpent in the necropolis".[57] The title refers not to a specific cosmographic place, but to the terrestrial location in which the entire pyramid complex physically sits.

53 On the identity of Osiris as an Akh and his close association with the Akhet, see G. Englund, *Akh—une notion religieuse dans l'Égypte pharaonique*, *Boreas* 11, 1978, p. 51-52.

54 On the theology of this phraseology, see M. Bommas, "Das Motiv der Sonnenstrahlen auf der Brust des Toten", *SAK* 36, 2007, p. 16-19.

55 PT 357 §585a (T/S/E, P/S/E, P/C/E, M/S/E, N/S/E). Parallel statements occur in two other texts which also address the deceased as 'Osiris NN': PT 364 §621b (T/A/W, P/S/S, M/A/E, N/A/E); PT 368 §636c (T/A/W, P/S/W, M/S/W, N/S/W). PT 664B §1887b (N/S/Sw) exhibits the same phraseology, but does not preserve the appellation "Osiris NN".

56 As is actually noted at Allen, "Reading a Pyramid", p.17 n. 21. Unis is unique among the pyramids in having such texts both on the sarcophagus chamber, west wall, and the antechamber, east wall. None of the later pyramids has apotropaic texts on the sarcophagus chamber, west wall.

57 Consistently in every Middle Kingdom source positioning a title before PT 226: L-MH1A, L1NY; Sq1C; Sq2C; T1Be; T3Be.

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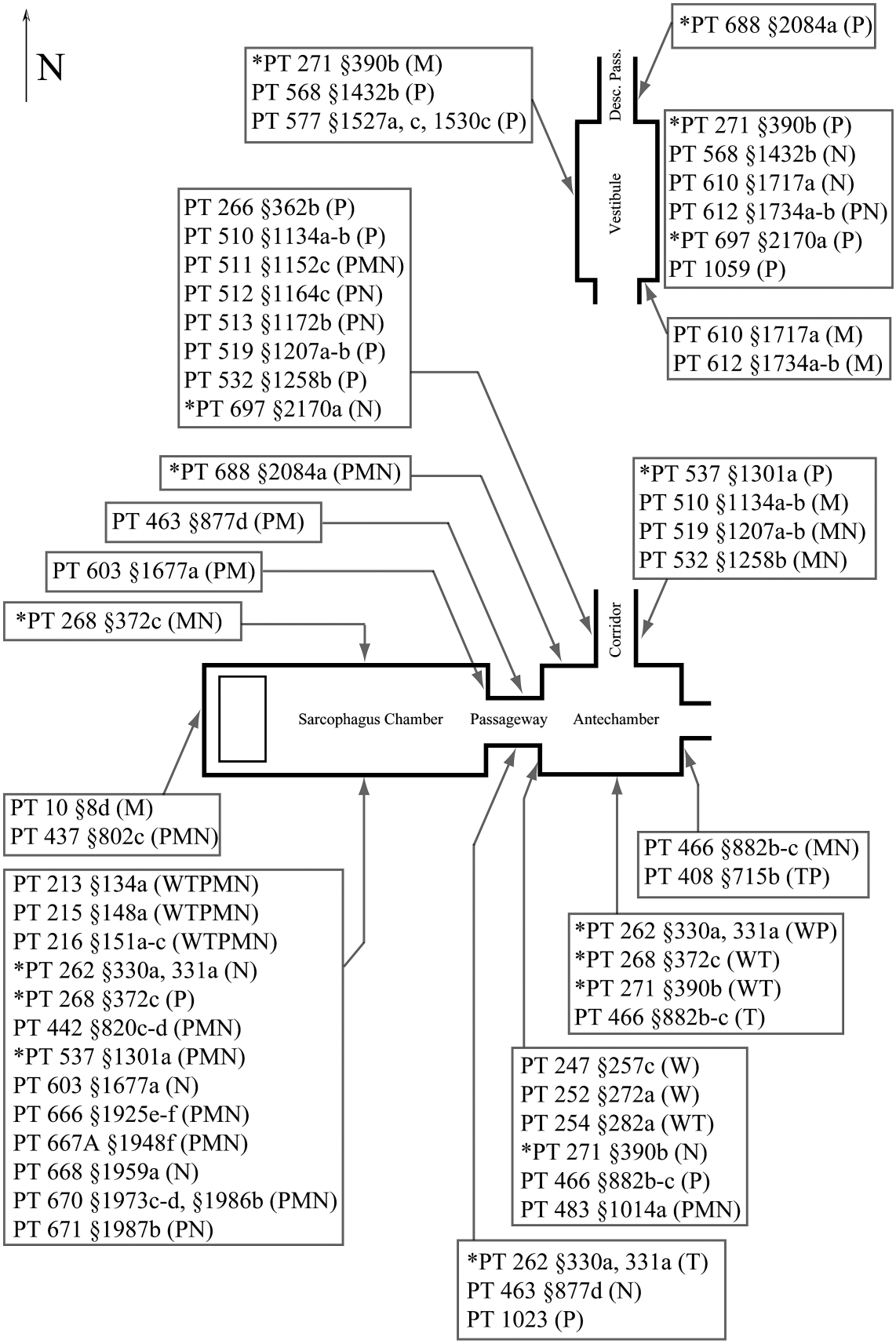

FIG. 2. References to the Duat among the Pyramids.

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3. Of the three texts cited to associate Osiris with the Duat (PT 262, 466, 577), there are a total of nine attestations. Ironically, only one of them is found in a sarcophagus chamber.[58] But this is not to say that the word *dwꜣt*, which appears in about forty texts altogether, is generally found in a particular place. Among the pyramids, it is found on the surfaces of every major area, as detailed in figure 2.[59] There is no special association between this word and individuated architectural space.

While as a rule texts which occur in more than one pyramid are positioned on the same surface from one to the next, six texts bearing the term *dwꜣt* are found in completely different areas. (These are indicated in the figure by an asterisk '*'.) For example, PT 262,[60] referring to the Duat at §§330a and 331a and dealing with the transferal from night-bark to day-bark, occurs in the antechamber (Unis and Pepi I), passageway (Teti), and sarcophagus chamber (Pepi II).[61] In fact, in the last-named pyramid it appears on the westernmost section of the south wall, far removed from the supposed exit from the Duat. It may be further pointed out that this text states that the king "has reached the sky's height",[62] but the exact same statement is found elsewhere in Pepi II's pyramid in a different text on the antechamber west wall.[63] The variability of position of texts like PT 262, as well as the variability of cosmographic content like "reaching the sky's height", not to mention that of simple references to cosmographic places, make a correspondence between cosmographic content and space untenable.

4. If the Pyramid Texts reflected a systematic transit with its *origin* at the Duat, then statements situating it as *destination* would have no purpose in the substructure at all. And yet three occur in the passageway, antechamber, and vestibule: "you (sc. the deceased) have passed the way to the Duat, to the place where Orion is",[64] "they take him (sc. the deceased) out to the Duat",[65] and "let the stairs to the Duat, to the place where Orion is, be set up for you (sc. the deceased)".[66] The texts treat a wider range of post-mortem experience than passage *from* Duat to Akhet to sky. They are also concerned with going there.

58 PT 262 §331 (W/A/S, T/P/S, P/A/S, N/S/S), PT 466 §882c (T/A/S, P/A/W, M/A/E, N/A/E), PT 577 §1525-27a (P/V/W).

59 In addition, T's sarcophagus makes reference to the Duat at PT 7 §5b, and "those of the Duat" are mentioned at PT 257 §306a (WT/A/W) and PT 476 §953a (PMN/A/W).

60 Noted at Allen, "Reading a Pyramid", p. 26.

61 Texts bearing the term *dwꜣt* without fixed location: PT 262 §§330a and 331a (W/A/S, T/P/S, P/A/S, N/S/S); PT 268 §372c (W/A/S, T/A/S, P/S/S, M/S/N, N/S/N); PT 271 §390b (W/A/S, T/A/S, P/V/E, M/V/W, N/A/W); PT 537 §1301a (P/S/S, P/C/E, M/S/S, N/S/S); PT 688 §2084a (P/A/N, P/D/E, M/A/N, N/A/N); PT 697 §2170a (P/V/E, N/C/W).

62 PT 262 §335a; see G. Jéquier, *Le monument funéraire de Pepi II.* 1, Cairo, 1936, pl. VII, l. 709+35; Allen, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, p. 249 (N 69).

63 PT 475 §949b (N/A/W); see Allen, *op. cit.*, p. 362 (N 423).

64 PT 1023 (P/P/S), for which see C. Berger-el Naggar *et al.*, *Les textes de la pyramide de Pépy Ier*, *MIFAO* 118/2, pl. V, l. 19.

65 PT 271 §390b (W/A/S, T/A/S, P/V/E, M/V/W, N/A/W). Stressing the significance of this text's position in Unis, Mathieu, "La signification du serdab", p. 291-298, pointed out that it is in direct conflict with the cosmographic theory presented by Allen and sought to reconcile it through an appeal to later evidence, leading to the proposition that the serdab constituted a second Duat—thus saving the theory. Mathieu does not, however, observe that PT 271 occurs in different locations in later pyramids. M. Nuzzolo, in the paper "Sun Temples and the Pyramid Texts: The King's Progress in the Evolution of His Cult", given at the Xth International Congress of Egyptologists on 23 May 2008, observed the variability of the spell's position, thus invalidating Mathieu's understanding of the passage and by extension maintaining the existence of a conflict in the theory of Allen. For further critique, see Billing, *Nut. The Goddess of Life*, p. 44-45 n. 72.

66 PT 610 §1717a (M/V/S, N/V/E).

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A further inconsistency arises from the fixed order in which the surfaces are supposed to be read. By that order, some texts speaking of *departing* the Duat appear *before* the ones naming it as destination.[67] The statements are meaningful only when it is understood that the Pyramid Texts were not configured as a quasi-narrative sequence or systematic process. Their configuration was motivated according to other principles.

5. There are about 910 Pyramid Texts. Among these, only about forty more or less complete ones bear the term *dwȝt*,[68] which means about 5%. The statistic is remarkable, for it suggests that, while clearly important, the locale is by no means the dominant concern of the corpus; by way of comparison, the names of the gods Seth and Geb each appear in well over twice as many texts. And yet the theory configures the term to be of paramount significance.

What goes for *dwȝt* in particular goes for cosmographic terminology in general: it is not ubiquitous. But there is a criterion which does form a frame of reference for nearly all Pyramid Texts. As illustration, attention may be directed to the one hundred and nineteen offering ritual texts occupying the north wall of the sarcophagus chamber of the pyramid of Unis. They consistently refer to the deceased in the grammatical second or third person, indicating that these were performed by priests speaking to and about the deceased for his benefit. On this ground, they are to be contrasted from texts originally composed for recitation by their beneficiary on his own behalf, thus originally in the first person, such as the apotropaic texts on the west wall of that king's sarcophagus chamber. Two different kinds of texts can be differentiated, therefore, on the basis of grammatical person. And because the deceased is mentioned in virtually every text, this distinction is pervasive. Doubtless for this reason scholars from Kurt Sethe through Allen have divided Pyramid Texts into two basic categories by means of it.[69]

Structure of performance allows offering ritual texts to be associated with other texts of the same category, such as the texts of the so-called "Resurrection Ritual" on the south wall of the sarcophagus chamber, and distinguished from those that are different, such as nearly all of the texts of Unis's antechamber. Examination of the performance structure in texts throughout all the pyramids shows that, as a general rule, there is a broad division between these two rooms on that basis: sacerdotal texts performed by priests dominate sarcophagus chambers, while personal texts originally composed for recitation by their own beneficiary dominate antechambers. As a matter of fact, this general distinction is already implicitly observed by Allen[70] and has since been supported in detail.[71] Thus, while it is not possible to generalize about all the Pyramid

67 PT 247 §257c (W/A/W) "when you go out from the Duat", thus preceding PT 271 §390b (W/A/S) cited above at n. 61 and 65, and PT 670 §1973d (P/S/S, M/S/S, N/S/S) "this Great One who would go out from the Duat" and §1986b "this Akh who goes out from the Duat, Osiris Neferkare, who goes out from Geb", thus preceding PT 271 §390b (P/V/E, M/V/W, N/A/W) and PT 610 §1717a (M/V/S, N/V/E), cited above at n. 66.

68 Setting aside the word "dawn (*dwȝt*)", which is found at PT 263 §341c; PT 504 §1082b; and PT 569 §1434c. For the identification of the texts, see above fig. 2.

69 See the literature cited at H.M. Hays, W. Schenck, "Intersection of Ritual Space and Ritual Representation: Pyramid Texts in Eighteenth Dynasty Theban Tombs", in P.F. Dorman, B.M. Bryan (eds.), *Sacred Space and Sacred Function in Ancient Thebes*, *SAOC* 61, 2007, p. 97 n. 3; H.M. Hays, "Old Kingdom Sacerdotal Texts", *JEOL* 41, 2009, p. 49, n. 15.

70 See Allen, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, p. 5-7; *id.*, "Reading a Pyramid", p. 18; J. Assmann, "Egyptian Mortuary Liturgies", in S. Israelit-Groll (ed.), *Studies in Egyptology Presented to Miriam Lichtheim*, 1, Jerusalem, 1990, p. 14; *id.*, *Tod und Jenseits im alten Ägypten*, Munich, 2001, p. 324.

71 See Hays, "Old Kingdom Sacerdotal Texts", p. 48-50 and 60.

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Texts on the basis of cosmographic content, since it is by no means omnipresent, it is possible and meaningful to make global statements on the basis of original settings of performance, since grammatical person is a nigh ubiquitous and empirically tangible criterion.

Texts were not divided into *dwꜣt* and *ꜣḫt* texts and accordingly distributed between the two rooms. Texts were largely divided between the sarcophagus chamber and antechamber according to how they were originally used.

B. *Antechamber ≠ Akhet*

1. The theory interprets the phrase "door of the Akhet" in two different ways. When it appears in the passageway in PT 246, it is held to indicate the door (*ꜥꜣwj ꜣḫt*) from the Duat *to* the Akhet, but when it appears in PT 311 in the antechamber next to the opening to the corridor, it is held to indicate the exit *from* the Akhet (*ꜥꜣwj ꜣḫt*) to the sky proper. This is an adaptive reading[72] for an ambiguous term. Since according to the theory the Akhet is the centermost cosmographic/architectural element, virtually any reference to the Akhet's doors anywhere in the tomb[73] can be modernly interpreted as either leading to or going out of that area. In other words, simple references to such doors show nothing prior to their interpretation.

But ancient evidence invalidates the adaptive approach. PT 690 §2095b exhorts the deceased to "go out from the gate of the Akhet (*rwt ꜣḫt*)", and it appears in the pyramid of Merenre on the antechamber east wall (thus "corresponding" to the entrance to the serdab), in the pyramid of Pepi II on the antechamber north wall (thus "corresponding" to the opening to the corridor), and in the pyramid of Pepi I on the sarcophagus chamber south wall, east end. In that place, the only architectural element it can "correspond" to is the passageway. One text, two rooms, three exits. Which comes first: the interpretation, or the evidence? If a cosmographic interpretation of the subterranean rooms is insisted on, then it is an interpretation which is applied to them, not derived from them.[74]

72 Meaning "a reading which overreads or underreads a text to force its meaning". With an adaptive reading, "one is no longer supporting a reading from an analysis of the evidence but creating a reading by *adaptation*" (H.P. Abbott, *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative*, Cambridge, 2002, p. 94).

73 In addition to PT 690 cited in the following paragraph, see PT 437 §799a (P/S/W, M/S/W, N/S/W) and PT 610 §1720a (M/V/S, N/V/E) "the gate of/in the sky to the Akhet is opened to you".

74 In this context, it is appropriate to draw attention to how a kind of adaptive reading is regularly employed to modernly superimpose cosmographic symbolism upon ancient architecture. At J. Kamrin, *The Cosmos of Khnumhotep II at Beni Hasan*, London, 1999, esp. p. 2 and 142-144, a tomb's cultic space is interpreted as a plan of the cosmos which includes the *dwꜣt* and the pre-creation god Nu (*nww*), though no textual basis is advanced for these claims. As assessed by A. Bolshakov ("Arrangement of Murals as a Principle of Old Kingdom Tomb Decoration", in Fitzenreiter, Herb (eds.), *Dekorietre Grabanlagen im Alten Reich*, p. 38-39 n. 7), Kamrin, *op. cit.*, "is led not by the material as it must be, but by a biased and extremely dubious idea". His formulation can stand as a definition of *adaptive reading*. Further examples of adaptive readings of architectural space include J.K. Hoffmeier, "The Use of Basalt in Floors of Old Kingdom Pyramid Temples", *JARCE* 30, 1993, p. 122-123, where the blackness of basalt floors in pyramid temples is supposed to represent the earth and the god Geb, with the entire structure therefore constituting a microcosm of the world; F.D. Friedman, "Notions of Cosmos in the Step Pyramid Complex", in P. Der Manuelian (ed.), *Studies in Honor of William Kelly Simpson*, Boston, 1996, p. 342-343, where the glistening sheen of the greenish-blue faience tiles bordering Djoser's underground reliefs is advanced as evidence that the tiled rooms represented the primeval ocean; J. Lustig, "Kinship, Gender and Age in Middle Kingdom Tomb Scenes and Texts", in J. Lustig (ed.), *Anthropology and Egyptology. A Developing Dialogue*, Sheffield, 1997, p. 52-54, where, for example, the two parts of a tomb—since they are distinct but similar—"may allude to the result of creation in which the primeval unity was divided into pairs of equivalent, but distinct, elements"; D. O'Connor, *op. cit.*, p. 142-143, where the roofed, western part of pyramid temple is asserted to correspond to "the

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2. Seventeen texts—PT 262, 264, 272, 359-363, 462-464, 587, and 673-677—are asserted to be "devoted to spells of passage through the marshland at the western edge of the Akhet", from the Marsh of Reeds (*sḫt jꜣrw*) to the *ꜣḫt*. In point of fact, only one of these texts actually mentions this zone, namely PT 264 §343b, with "filled are the Marshes of Reeds with water".[75] How is it known that all of these texts are concerned with passage through the *sḫt jꜣrw* when only one of them mentions it? Their concern with this passage does not reside in their hieroglyphs; it is projected upon them by the modern, adaptively interpreting reader.

But the term *sḫt jꜣrw* appears in many texts besides this one, and texts bearing the term tend to cluster together. The highest concentrations are in the antechamber, corridor, and vestibule rather than the passageway. The most striking concentration occurs on the west wall of the *corridor* of Merenre's pyramid: in that space is a series of nine contiguous texts, only one of which one does not show the term.[76] So, if there were a correspondence between content and space, then at least the corridor represents this intermediate zone. But since the term *sḫt jꜣrw* actually occurs in the other areas of the pyramids as well, including the sarcophagus chamber,[77] it is simpler to conclude that such a correspondence would be modernly adaptive rather than authentically constitutive.

3. Since the evidence advanced for the symbolic identity of the antechamber as the Akhet rests principally in directionality, it is useful to examine the position of texts actually making reference to going there. While a single text conforms to the theory, in that it appears alternately in the sarcophagus chamber and passageway,[78] and while one might reasonably allow as acrobatically conformable the five with such passages appearing in the antechamber itself (PT 263, 265, 270, 301, and 481),[79] it is not possible to do so with the four appearing in the corridor (PT 266, 504, 519, and 609): "the two reed-boats of the sky are given to Pepi, that he might cross by them to the Akhet, to Harakhti",[80] with the same reed-boats given to the king "that he might thus cross to Re, to the Akhet",[81] with the reed-boats lashed together for him "that he might go thereby to the Akhet, to Re",[82] and with the (Marsh[83] of) Reeds

movement from Duat through the Field of Reeds to the Akhet, and perhaps Field of Offerings", without showing a single proximate connection between the Egyptian terms and spaces in question. It is worth considering the admonition of W.A. Graham, (*Beyond the Written Word: Oral Aspects of Scripture in the History of Religion*, Cambridge, 1993, p. 13 with references at n. 7): archaeology can provide basis for conclusions about material things, but concerning human affairs such as religious convictions, it "can rarely offer more than the most tentative of hypotheses unless its findings can be correlated with written evidence".

75 It is this very passage which J.P. Allen, ("Cosmology" p. 19), cites to establish the relative position of the *sḫt jꜣrw* as prior to the Akhet.

76 See H.M. Hays, "Transformation of Context: The Field of Rushes in Old and Middle Kingdom Mortuary Literature", in S. Bickel, B. Mathieu (eds.), *D'un monde à l'autre. Textes des Pyramides et Textes des Sarcophages*, *BdE* 139, 2004, p. 183-185, with n. 74 and 76. Passages from the Merenre corridor series include PT 504 §1086c "in the Marsh of Reeds", PT 505 §1091a "to the Marsh of Reeds", PT 563 §1408b "in the Marsh of Reeds", PT 323 §519a "in the Pool of Reeds (*mr jꜣrw*)", PT 525 §1245b "in the Marsh of Reeds", PT 507 §1102c "the Marsh of Reeds is thus inundated", PT 526 §1247a-b "in the Pool of Reeds". For the equivalence of the Marsh and Pool of Reeds, cf. *ibid.*, p. 175 with n. 3.

77 See *ibid.*, p. 185, n. 75.

78 PT 264 §342b (T/P/S, P/S/E).

79 PT 263 §337c (W/A/S); PT 265 §351d (P/A/W); PT 270 §387c (W/A/S, P/A/W, M/A/W, N/A/W); PT 301 §448c (W/A/E, T/A/S, P/A/S, M/A/E, N/A/E); PT 481 §999b (similarly §1000b) (T/A/S, P/A/W, M/A/W, N/A/W).

80 PT 266 §358c-d (P/C/W).

81 PT 504 §1086b (P/C/E, M/C/W, N/C/W).

82 PT 519 §1206f (P/C/W, M/C/E, N/C/E).

83 PT 609 §1704a (M) writes *mḥ [sḫt] jꜣrw*, with version N lost in this place. The restoration is justified by the phraseology consistently found elsewhere: PT 263 §340c (W): *mḥ.t(j) sḫwt-jꜣrw*; PT 264 §343b (T): *mḥ.j sḫwt-jꜣrw*; PT 265 §352b (P): *mḥ.y sḫwt-ḏꜣrw*; and PT 266 §359a (P): *j.mḥ.j sḫt-jꜣrw*.

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filled, "that he might cross thereby to the Akhet, to the place where the gods are born".[84] It makes no sense to speak of going to the Akhet after one has just left the architectural space supposed to represent it. So long as it is assumed that texts are to be read in a definitive order, and that their contents have an immediate relation with the particular space in which they are inscribed, the four corridor texts are meaningful only when it is understood that the just-departed antechamber is most definitely *not* the Akhet. In this as in other ways the theory invalidates itself.

The distribution poses a further problem. All of these texts speak of going to the Akhet, and they occur in the sarcophagus chamber, passageway, antechamber, and corridor. If we insist that there must be a connection between content and architectural space, then the only conclusion that can be drawn from all the data is that the Akhet is the above-ground area of the burial complex. Same premise, uniform consideration of evidence, different conclusion: invalidated theory.

But in the meantime, some actual facts about the distribution of texts in the pyramids have been uncovered. They are worthy of consideration, because they bear upon the actual organization of texts in the pyramids. A simple rule has now been twice seen: when there are multiple exemplars of the same text, they are usually positioned on the same surface from pyramid to pyramid: texts tend to be repeated in the same location[85]. In the case just discussed, multiple exemplars of PT 270, 301, and 481 consistently occur in the antechamber, while the exemplars of PT 504, 519, and 609 always occur in the corridor. Their consistency of placement shows adherence to precedent, though not immutably.

4. As to being an Akh in the Akhet, *3ḫ m 3ḫt*, the adducing of a passage with this phraseology does not really seem to be intended to support the cosmographic theory, but rather to explain a theological principle. But it is worth further consideration owing to the significance of the term *3ḫ* and its obvious association with the term *3ḫt*. It is also useful because such statements deal not with directionality but with actually being in the place in question.

Although the theory interprets the antechamber as the Akhet, one "corridor" text, PT 532, exhorts the deceased: "Be an Akh in the Akhet!"[86] Still other texts with this phraseology appear in the passageway and sarcophagus chamber,[87] with the only rule for placement being a general adherence to positional precedent from pyramid to pyramid in cases of multiple exemplars. Not just in the antechamber, but effectively all throughout his pyramid is the

84 PT 609 §1704c (M/C/W, N/C/E).

85 As already noted above at § VI.A.3, and see also the similar observation of J. Leclant, "État d'avancement (été 1979) de la recherche concernant les nouveaux textes des pyramides de Téti, Pépi Ier et Mérenrê", in *L'égyptologie en 1979 : Axes prioritaires de recherches. Second congrès international des égyptologues, Grenoble, 10-15 septembre 1979.* 2, Paris, 1982, p. 34. J.A. Styles ("The Problem of Order in the Pyramid Texts: A Quantitative Approach", *JARCE* 42, 2005-2006, p. 13-32) attempts to show this point in detail, but fails to analyse down to the level of wall surface; the article's methodology is crippled because the nature of texts varies from surface to surface, as signalled already by Leclant, *loc. cit.*

86 PT 532 §1261b (P/C/W, M/C/E, N/C/E).

87 The other passages bearing this phraseology are PT 217 §152d (W/S/S, T/S/S, P/S/S, M/S/S, N/S/S), PT 264 §350c (T/P/S, P/S/E) (cited by Allen, "Reading a Pyramid", p. 27), PT 487 §1046b (P/A/W, M/A/W, N/A/W), as well as the four texts cited above at n. 55, which may be reiterated as follows: PT 364 §621b (T/A/W, P/S/S, M/A/E, N/A/E), PT 357 §585a (T/S/E, P/S/E, P/C/E, M/S/E, N/S/E), PT 368 §636c (T/A/W, P/S/W, M/S/W, N/S/W), and PT 664B §1887b (N/S/S).

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king made to be an Akh in the Akhet. It cannot be correctly said that texts are positioned according to how their cosmographic content situates the deceased in a mapped-out journey through his tomb; it is correct to say that texts are generally positioned in conformity with their locations in previous tombs.

C. *The Doors of the Sky*

1. It was already shown above that the theory's interpretation of PT 311,[88] which speaks of opening the door of the Akhet *(ꜥwj ꜣḫt)*, is adaptive in holding that this door "corresponds to the door from the antechamber to the corridor". To emphasize this point, it may be noted that the text in question occurs in the vestibule in the two later pyramids which have it (Pepi I and Merenre), thus far beyond the corridor "door".

2. An adaptive reading is present also in the interpretation of PT 313, the first in Unis's corridor. According to the theory, this spell similarly "envisions the king standing at this door (see *Pyr*. 502a)".[89] Since the cited passage states, "The phallus of Babi is drawn: the doors of the sky are opened",[90] it is obvious that the idea is supposed to be that the text makes direct reference to an immediately proximate architectural analog. When it says "doors of the sky", it really means the physical space where the statement appears: the entry into the antechamber, or rather its exit out to the corridor.

In fact, phraseology referring to opening of the doors of the sky appears in about thirty-five texts throughout the entire Pyramid Texts corpus. They occur in every major area of the pyramids, as itemized in detail below:

Texts in Sarcophagus Chamber Only[91]
PT 355 §572a, §572d (T/S/E, P/S/E, M/S/E, N/S/E): *wn ꜥwj pt*;
PT 422 §756c (P/S/W, M/S/W, N/S/W): *wn ꜥwj pt, szn ꜥwj qbḥw*;
PT 458 §862b (P/S/E, N/S/S): *wn ꜥwj pt, szn ꜥwj qbḥw*;
PT 666A §1927b (P/S/S, M/S/S, N/S/S): *wn ꜥwj pt, zn ꜥwj qbḥw*;
PT 667A §§1943d, 1945f (P/S/S, M/S/S, N/S/S): *wn rwj pt, zn rwj qbḥw, wn rwt ḫsft*;
PT 670 §1972 (P/S/S, M/S/S, N/S/S): *wn ꜥwj pt*;
PT 718 §2232c (P/S/N, N/S/S): *wn ꜥwj pt.*

Texts in Passageway Only
PT 360 §603c (T/P/N, N/P/S): *wn nw* (sc. *ꜥwj pt*);
PT 361 §604c (T/P/N, N/P/S): *wn ꜥwj pt jpf*;
PT 463 §876a-b (P/P/N, M/P/N, N/P/S): *wn ꜥwj pt, zn ꜥwj qbḥw jpw ḫsfw rḫwt*;
PT 675 §2001a (P/P/S, M/P/S, N/P/N): *wn ꜥwj pt, zn sḥdw*;
PT 676 §2009b (N/P/N): *zn ꜥwj pt.*

88 See above, § VI.B.1.
89 Allen, "Reading a Pyramid", p. 28.
90 PT 313 §502a (W/C/W).
91 See also PT 437 §799a (P/S/W, M/S/W, N/S/W): *wn sbꜣ pt jr ꜣḫt* and PT 667 §1934e (P/S/S, M/S/S, N/S/S): *wn ꜥw ḫsfw rḫwt*.

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Texts in Antechamber Only[92]
PT 469 §907a-b (P/A/W, M/A/E, N/A/E): *wn ꜥ3wj bꜣ-kꜣ jmj qbḥ*, *szn ꜥ3wj bjꜣ jmj sḫdw*;
PT 470 §917a (P/A/W, M/A/S, N/A/W): *wbꜣ qbḥw*;
PT 479 *passim* (P/A/W, M/A/W, N/A/W): *wn ꜥ3wj pt*, *zn ꜥ3wj qbḥw*;
PT 482 §1004b (P/A/W, M/A/W, N/A/W): *wn ꜥ3wj pt*, *zn ꜥ3wj pḏwt*;
PT 485 §1025a (P/A/W, M/A/S): *wn ꜥ3wj pt*, *zn ꜥ3wj qbḥw*;
PT 681 §2035a (N/A/N): *wbꜣ qbḥw*.

Texts in Corridor Only
PT 313 §502a (W/C/W): *wn ꜥ3wj pt*;
PT 503 §1078a (P/C/E, M/C/W, N/C/E): *wn pt*;
PT 510 *passim* (P/C/W, M/C/E): *wn ꜥ3wj pt*, *zn ꜥ3wj qbḥw*;
PT 511 §1151a (P/C/W, M/C/W, N/C/W): *wn ꜥ3w pt*;
PT 519 §1203c (P/C/W, M/C/E, N/C/E): *wn ꜥ3wj ptr*;
PT 536 §1291b-c (P/C/E): *wn ꜥ3wj pt*, *zn ꜥ3wj nwt*, *zn ꜥ3wj qbḥw*.

Texts in Vestibule Only[93]
PT 548 §1343d (P/V/S): *wn ꜥ3 jꜣbtj n pt*;
PT 553 §1361a-b (P/V/E, N/V/E): *wn ꜥ3wj pt*, *zn ꜥ3wj qbḥw, nḫbḫb ꜥ3wj nwt*;
PT 572 §1474c (P/V/W, M/V/E): *wn ꜥ3wj pt*, *zn ꜥ3wj sḫdw*.

Texts in Sarcophagus Chamber and Other Space
PT 272 §392b (W/A/S, T/P/S, N/S/N): *wn nw* (sc. *ꜥrrt nt nww*);
PT 322 §518a (T/S/W, P/C/W, M/C/W, N/C/E): *wn pt*;
PT 325 *passim* (T/S/W, P/D/W): *wn rꜣ ꜥ3wj pt*, *zn ꜥ3wj qbḥw*;
PT 374 §659a (T/A/W, P/S/S, M/S/S): *wn ꜥ3wj pt*;
PT 412 §727a (T/Ser/N, P/S/S, M/S/N, N/S/N): *wn ꜥ3wj pt*, *zn ꜥ3wj sḫdw*;
PT 461 §873c (P/S/E, M/A/E, N/A/W): *wn ꜥ3wj pt*, *zn ꜥ3wj qbḥw*.

Texts in Vestibule and Corridor[94]
PT 563 *passim* (P/V/W, M/C/W, N/C/W): *wn ꜥ3wj pt*, *zn ꜥ3wj qbḥw*;
PT 573 §1480a (P/V/W, M/C/E, N/C/E): *wn ꜥ3wj pt*, *szn ꜥ3wj qbḥw*;
PT 697 §2170c (P/V/E, N/C/W): *wn ꜥ3 jꜣbtj n pt*.

Where are the doors of the sky? If one assumes that there is a correspondence between text and space, then they must be *everywhere*, for texts referring to them occur everywhere.

92 See also PT 275 §416a (W/A/E): *wn ḫns*.
93 See also PT 610 §1720a (M/V/S, N/V/E): *wn sbꜣ pt jr ꜥḫt*.
94 See also PT 311 §496a (W/A/N, P/V/E, M/V/W): *wn ꜥ3wj ꜥḫt* and PT 587 §1604a (P/D/W, P/D/E, M/P/N, N/P/S): *wn=sn* (sc. *ꜥ3w ḫrjw*).

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Here is some more detail. Fully one quarter of these statements occur in texts situated in multiple areas from pyramid to pyramid. Notably, this applies even for texts found in Unis, namely PT 272 and 311.[95] As to the consistently positioned texts, they appear in effectively every space and on most every inscribed surface.

The distribution of texts referring to the opening of the doors of the sky within each pyramid may be summarized as follows: Unis has all in the antechamber and corridor and none in the sarcophagus chamber; Teti has only one in the antechamber, none in the corridor, and two in the sarcophagus chamber; Pepi I has them on every major surface except for the south and east walls of the antechamber; Merenre has them on every major surface except for the east wall of the sarcophagus chamber and north wall of the antechamber; and Pepi II has them on every major surface except for the south wall of the antechamber. What emerges from this review is a history of proliferation of texts bearing the term (concomitant with a progressive increase in texts in successive pyramids[96]), with a distribution which follows no pattern from pyramid to pyramid.

3. Of equal importance is a consequence of this sort of reading: it reduces the meaning of the text to a denotative signifier. The singled out, excerpted statement becomes little more than a sign on a wall, like a caption on a temple doorjamb. It ignores the connotative meaning the text had for its ancient audience. This is a crucial point. For good reason, it is widely held that the Pyramid Texts as a body of literature, as opposed to physical artefact, had already existed for a century and more before their introduction to the tomb. Allen himself has noted their pre-inscriptional history.[97] Their past entails that Old Kingdom mortuary literature already possessed established, connotative meanings prior to their introduction to the tomb. In emphasizing a supposed, architecturally denotative meaning for their secondary usage as inscriptional decoration, the theory eclipses their primary significance.

That significance ought to be pursued. In the case of "doors of the sky", it is topical to consider how pervasive it was in multiple dimensions of Egyptian life, from indicating the mummification workshop to the naos in which a god's image passed the night.[98] The evidence from outside the pyramids shows that to open the doors of the sky was not to open a door to a subterranean corridor,[99] but was, above all, to reveal the sacred image of a resurrected

95 Noted as having been advanced in support of the theory at §§ V.B.2 and V.C.1 respectively. For further critique on the theory's handling of PT 311, see above §§ VI.B.1 and VI.C.1.

96 See Hays, "Old Kingdom Sacerdotal Texts", p. 59-60.

97 See J.P. Allen, "Funerary Texts and Their Meaning", in S. D'Auria *et al.*, *Mummies and Magic. The Funerary Arts of Ancient Egypt*, Boston, 1988, p. 38-39 with n. 2-3; see also Mathieu, "Que sont les *Textes des Pyramides*?", p. 15; and with great clarity *id.*, "Pyramides à textes et formules conjuratoires", in Y. Koenig (ed.), *La magie en Égypte: à la recherche d'une définition*, *Actes du colloque organisé par le musée du Louvre les 29 et 30 septembre 2000*, Paris, 2002, p. 188-189.

98 Cf. E. Brovarski, "The Doors of Heaven", *Or* 46, 1977, 107-110; Otto, *Das ägyptische Mundöffnungsritual. II. Kommentar*, p. 168; H-G. Bartel, "Funktionale Aspekte des täglichen Rituals im Tempel Sethos' I. in Abydos", in H. Beinlich, *et al.* (eds.), *5. ägyptologische Tempeltagung*, *ÄAT* 33, 2002, p. 12.

99 A door which in physical reality did not exist: the throughway from antechamber to corridor was completely open. Although J.-P. Allen ("Reading a Pyramid", p. 24, fig. 5) shows doors here and in the passageway, neither of these locations was closed at all. Only the throughway from antechamber to serdab was closed, variously with wooden doors or stone blocks. Ironically the figure at *loc. cit.* does not show this. See A. Labrousse, *L'architecture des pyramides à textes I. Saqqara Nord*, *BdE* 114, 1996, p. 33 (W) and 58 (T); *id.*, *L'architecture des pyramides à textes II. Saqqara Sud*, *BdE* 131, 2000, p. 35 (P), 66 (M), and 91 (N). My many thanks to A.J. Morales for pointing out this discrepancy.

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god.[100] It was an exalted metaphor of the dénouement following rebirth. Thus the revelation of Thutmosis III in the god's sanctuary at his purported designation as heir,[101] and thus the declaration of Seti I upon opening the naos holding the image of the god Osiris.[102] Though these particular statements stem from later sources, to suggest that such usages are secondary is a matter of conjecture,[103] while the secondary nature of their use in the pyramids is not. To reduce such statements to a secondary, architectural metaphor or code is to impoverish them of their primary, connotative meanings.

4. In the context of discussing doors leading out of the subterranean chambers, it is useful to introduce a further point by considering a recent attempt to slightly modify the cosmographic theory. In it, an argument is made that the inscribed Pyramid Texts together with the "palace façade motif" displayed at the west end of the sarcophagus chamber constitute "the boundaries of the cosmos over which the king reigned beyond his death". This theory, that the walls of the subterranean chambers were not mere walls but were "cosmic" walls, is made on the basis of assertions that 1) because both inscribed columns of text and the palace façade design visually display "verticality", they must serve the same function, 2) the palace façade was a representation of a palace wall, 3) the subterranean chambers represented the cosmos (in following Spiegel and Allen), 4) "cosmic boundaries constituted a key element in Egyptian conceptions of the cosmos", and 5) therefore one must expect such boundaries to be represented in the tomb.[104] The discussion fails to take account of the well known fact that the palace façade motif in question is not a representation of a wall *per se*, but of a door.[105] Even door bolts are often found in their design,[106] while such representations are commensurate

100 This being the second of three denotative contexts for the theme asserted at J. Assmann, *Altägyptische Totenliturgien, 2, Totenliturgien und Totensprüche in Grabinschriften des Neuen Reiches*, Heidelberg, 2005, p. 178-179, the other two being the opening of doors to permit the admission of an enterer, and opening of doors to release the unhindered dead. In fact, all three contexts are facets of a single topos.

101 *Urk* IV 259, 11-12 ([*zn*] *ꜥꜣ*[*w*] *ḥrjt*, *wn sbꜣw ꜣḫt*), on which passage see J. Assmann, "Death and Initiation in the Funerary Religion of Ancient Egypt", in W.K. Simpson (ed.), *Religion and Philosophy in Ancient Egypt*, p. 142 with n. 41.

102 See A.M. Calverley, M.F. Broome, *The Temple of King Sethos I at* Abydos, 1, *The Chapels of Osiris, Isis and Horus*, London, 1933, pl. 4.

103 Cf. H.M. Hays, "The Worshipper and the Worshipped in the Pyramid Texts", *SAK* 30, 2002, p. 154-156, on the text-historical relationship between Pyramid Texts and texts of genres attested only later.

104 De Trafford, "The Palace Façade Motif and the Pyramid Texts", esp. p. 274-275 and 281.

105 As already observed by H. Ricke ("Bemerkungen zur ägyptischen Baukunst des Alten Reichs", I, *BÄBA* 4, 1944, p. 36), it represented "die Torpartie, den monumentalen Eingang eines Zeltpalaste". H. Altenmüller ("Der Grabherr des Alten Reiches in seinem Palast des Jenseits", in Berger, Mathieu (eds.), *Études sur l'Ancien Empire et la nécropole de Saqqâra dédiées à Jean-Philippe Lauer*, p. 11-13) assumes that the Prunkscheintür as it appears in the above-ground areas of non-royal tombs functioned less as a throughway between this world and the next but rather served to designate the tomb as a "Palast des Jenseits". But the instances he cites of the Prunkscheintür's alternation with and replacement of conventional false doors merely illustrate the observation of S. Wiebach-Koepke ("False Door", in Redford, *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt*, 1, p. 499): the forms are typologically different. But the fact that the Prunkscheintür could replace the conventional false door in the latter's primary setting, namely as cultic focus (as at P*M* III²/2, p. 535 room V, 106c; see N. Kanawati, *Mereruka and His Family. II, The Tomb of Waatetkhethor*, *ACE* 26, London, 2008, pl. 44), demonstrates their equivalent functional value, as does the occasional intermingling of "palace-façade" nicheing into an otherwise conventional false door (as at W.K. Simpson, *The Offering Chapel of Kayemnofret in the Museum of Fine Arts*, Boston, 1992, pl. B). By substitution and hybrid composition, it is evident that their representational meaning was equivalent.

106 See e.g. Labrousse, *L'architecture des pyramides à textes II. Saqqara Sud,* p. 98 and 102, and pls. 32-33 (Merenre); Jéquier, *Le monument funéraire de Pepi II*, I, pl. 27 (Pepi II).

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with painted false door representations in burial chambers of Old Kingdom officials,[107] and in and upon coffins of the Middle Kingdom.[108] Consequently, Egyptologists who study the pyramids' exemplars of this design normally refer to it as *fausse-porte ornée*, *palace-façade false door,* or *Prunkscheintür*.[109] In the pyramids, what the motif represents is not a "cosmic boundary"—virtually no mention of which is made in the Pyramid Texts at all in spite of its imagined importance[110]—but a means of access on the north, west, and south sides of the sarcophagus chamber.

As such, the palace-façade false doors to the north, west, and south complement the passageway at the east end of the sarcophagus chamber. And as a result, while it is true that most[111] texts are oriented as if to be read by a person physically moving from the sarcophagus and out of the tomb, it is equally true that portals are to be found all around the corpse. Accepting the tomb's decoration as operatively meaningful—a false door "findet ihre Ausgestaltung unter dem Aspekt, daß sie für den Verstorbenen ein wichtiges Instrument in seinem jenseitigen Leben bildet"[112]—one must further accept that the king was not limited in directionality of ingress and egress: access was present *in every cardinal direction*. Taken as operative, the palace-façade false door decoration indicates that the king need not depart the tomb along the physical route mortals must follow.[113]

5. The last element to "Reading a Pyramid" is an evocation of the connection between a bit of phraseology cropping up in a few Pyramid Texts, later made prominent as the most important title of the New Kingdom Book of the Dead: *prt m hrw*, which quite evidently has to do with exit from the tomb. Two texts are cited. The first, PT 301, occurs on the antechamber, east wall in Unis, thus towards the end of the supposed Akhet proceedings. Other pyramids keep it on the same wall or put it on the south wall. The other text, PT 260, appears only in

107 False doors begin appearing in the burial chambers of tombs of officials at precisely the same moment as the appearance of Pyramid Texts and false doors in tombs of kings; see A.O. Bolshakov, *Man and His Double in Egyptian Ideology of the Old Kingdom*, *ÄAT* 37, 1997, p. 113, 115, 120, and 139 (sources BC 2 and BC 7); K. Dawood, "Animate Decoration and Burial Chambers of Private Tombs during the Old Kingdom: New Evidence from the Tomb of Kairer at Saqqara", in Pantalacci, Berger-el-Naggar (eds.), *Des Néferkarê aux Montouhotep*, p. 117 (sources SBC 2 and SBC 7). As noted by H. Altenmüller (*op.cit.*, p. 14), stone sarcophagi with palace façade decoration begin appearing in the Fourth Dynasty. On the earliest decorated non-royal burial chambers, see also N. Kanawati, "Decoration of Burial Chambers, Sarcophagi and Coffins in the Old Kingdom", in K. Daoud, S. Bedier, S. Abd el-Fatah (eds.), *Studies in Honor of Ali Radwan*, *ASAE-Suppl.* 34/2, 2005, p. 57-58.

108 See numerous examples of burial chamber and coffin false doors from both periods at G. Lapp, *Typologie der Särge und Sargkammern von der 6. bis 13. Dynastie*, *SAGA* 7, 1993, pl. 2-43.

109 See for example K. Sethe, *Die altaegyptische Pyramidentexte*, 3, Leipzig, 1922, *passim*; Spiegel, "Die religionsgeschichtliche Stellung der Pyramidentexte", p. 132 fig. 2a and p. 136; S. Wiebach, *Die ägyptische Scheintür. Morphologische Studien zur Entwicklung und Bedeutung der Hauptkultstelle in den privat-Gräbern des Alten Reiches*, *HÄS* 1, 1981, p. 45-51; D. Arnold, *Lexikon der ägyptischen Baukunst*, Munich, 1994, p. 227; D. Arnold, *The Encyclopedia of Ancient Egyptian Architecture*, Princeton, 2003, p. 89.

110 Out of over 900 texts, cosmic boundaries are mentioned only at PT 261 § 324c. This text is not included among the scanty and vague references to specific Pyramid Texts at De Trafford, *op. cit.*

111 T/A/E and P/A/E arrange their texts from north to south, and thus from outside-in rather than inside-out, therefore violating the supposed reading plan.

112 Wiebach, *Die ägyptische Scheintür*, p. 159, concerning the features of door leaves and door bolts on false doors.

113 Cf. in this regard G. Englund, "The Border and the Yonder Side", in: E. Teeter, J.A. Larson (eds.), *Gold of Praise: Studies on Ancient Egypt in Honor of Edward F. Wente*, Chicago, 1999, p. 101-103 with fig. 9.1 and p. 105-108.

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Unis, where it spans the antechamber, west and south walls, so in fact towards the beginning of the supposed Akhet proceedings.

But other texts make use of the phraseology. Above all, note may be made of PT 624 §1761c: "It is N., acting <as> [Min] who goes out on the day (*pr m hrw*). N. is Osiris, the one who goes out from the night sky (*pr m šsꜣt*)."[114] In Pepi I, this text occurs in the descending passage (thus nearly at the mouth of the tomb itself), but in Merenre[115] and Pepi II it appears at the sarcophagus chamber, north wall at *the far west end*. As the phraseology *prj m hrw* has to do with exit from the tomb, here as repeatedly seen elsewhere, the text's message has no effect on its specific location.

VII. Summary of the Invalidation of the Theory

While it is definitely the case that the Egyptians conceptualized the tomb in cosmographic and other terms, the theory that there was an articulated symbology for individual subterranean rooms in the pyramids is untenable. It fails because, even if its premise were true, then the cosmographic identities of the two principal chambers are ambiguous: by applying the theory's reasoning to other evidence, we should have to understand that the sarcophagus chamber is not only the Duat but also the Akhet,[116] that the antechamber is not only the Akhet but also the Duat,[117] and that even the above-ground portion of the tomb is the Akhet.[118] Further, the theory's premise—that there is a correspondence between textual content and a cosmographic meaning of the chambers—has been repeatedly shown to be incorrect. Because texts bearing the same cosmographic content are distributed throughout each pyramid[119] and change locations from pyramid to pyramid,[120] it is impossible for them, in conjunction with their placement, to denote differentiated space. Moreover, it cannot be held that the texts of each pyramid are arranged according to a quasi-narrative process involving passage from one cosmographic area to the next, since many texts violate the theory's itinerary.[121] Finally, while eclipsing the primary meaning of the texts in favor of a supposed secondary meaning,[122] the theory's assertion that the deceased was to read the texts in conjunction with following the physical route out of the pyramid is invalidated by the presence of false doors around the sarcophagus.[123] The texts make reference to the tomb and give it symbolic meanings—above all Osiris and Nut—but they are not dominated by cosmographic content, they do not offer a compartmentalized symbology, and there is no fixed relationship between a text's statements and the immediate space in which it occurs.

114 Restoring from Nt. P substitutes *dfḏ* for *jr=f* [*mnw*]; N is too fragmentary to be of assistance. The reading *hrw* for the sun-disk is the correct one, in view of its opposition to *šsꜣt*.

115 For the presence and position of this text in this tomb, see Berger-el Naggar *et al.*, *Les textes de la pyramide de Pépy Ier*, *MIFAO* 118/1, p. 124.

116 See above § VI.A.1.

117 See above § VI.A.2.

118 See above § VI.B.3.

119 See above §§ VI.A.3, VI.B.1-2 and 4, and VI.C.2 and 5.

120 See above §§ VI.A.3 and VI.C.1-2.

121 See above §§ VI.A.4 and VI.B.3.

122 See above § VI.C.3.

123 See above § VI.C.4. The supposed general manner of reading is also invalidated by the defiant arrangement of texts in the pyramids of Teti and Pepi I, antechamber, east wall; see above n. 111.

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Given the number of scholarly works which have uncritically relied upon its credibility, this point cannot be too strongly stated: the theory that there was an articulated symbology for individual subterranean rooms in the pyramids is unsustainable.

VIII. The Relationship of Architecture to Text

At some moment in the late Fifth Dynasty, someone conceived of the idea to decorate the burial chamber walls of kings and queens with hieroglyphic texts. The texts put to this task were selected because they related to matters of corpse and crypt, which is abundantly evident in their semantic obsession with these things.[124] Owing to their relevance to the deceased, they were equally a kind of "tomb library"[125] as well as a representation of what was or might have been said by priests.[126]

Having conceived of this idea of decoration, and having chosen the texts to be displayed, decisions had to be made about their distribution. The walls of the tomb constituted the canvas for these decisions, and their general orientation and arrangement were already largely dictated by tradition. The "bicameral" layout is a feature of the royal tomb since the pyramid of Userkaf at the beginning of the Fifth Dynasty; indeed, analogs can be detected as far back as Menkaure. Since the general architectural organization was established long before the implementation of textual decoration, the organization of non-verbal space necessarily influenced the organization of verbal inscription.

Indeed, with a predetermined division into two parts, it was natural for the ancient editor to put texts of one kind in one room and texts from a separate category in the other. Especially clear in the pyramids of Pepi I, Merenre, and Pepi II, texts of a priestly kind dominate the sarcophagus chamber, and those from a different category are predominant in the antechamber. The ones in the sarcophagus chamber are mainly from the categories of offering ritual texts and Jan Assmann's "mortuary liturgies"; the ones in the antechamber are so-called "tomb equipment texts", with an original format like what is usually found in the Book of the Dead, the personal recitation.[127]

Distinct groups of texts appear in these rooms. The meaning of a group of texts must be seen in the context of the group's position in life *before* it was introduced to the tomb, because that meaning was the primary one. While that meaning can now only be inferred due to the absence of paratextual information in the pyramids themselves, much can still be said about commonalities and differences between the groups. This is most appreciable on the thematic

124 Cf. the assumption of D. Arnold ("Rituale und Pyramidentempel", *MDAIK* 33, 1977, p. 2): "Nach allem aber, was man über Bildprogramm und Raumfunktion ägyptischer religiöser Architektur weiß, muß ein enger Zusammenhang zwischen beiden gefordert werden"; cf. *id.*, *Wandrelief und Raumfunktion in ägyptischen Tempeln des Neuen Reiches*, *MÄS* 2, 1962, p. 4. The concern of the texts with death and the post-mortem condition already establishes a strong and proximate connection between the inscriptions and the physical purpose of the subterranean chambers.

125 Cf. on another matter the notion of M. Bommas "Zwei magische Sprüche in einem spätägyptischen Ritualhandbuch (pBM EA 10081): Ein weiterer Fall für die 'Verborgenheit des Mythos'", *ZÄS* 131, 2004, p. 95 with n. 5.

126 Cf. J. Assmann, *Images et rites de la mort dans l'Égypte ancienne. L'apport des liturgies funéraires*, Paris, 2000, p. 32; J. Assmann, *Tod und Jenseits im alten Ägypten*, Munich, 2001, p. 334-335.

127 See above at n. 71.

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level.[128] Groups of the same category share semantic content, and this leads to general differences perceivable between texts of the two rooms.

There were presumably several, competing factors[129] that influenced how specific groups were to be positioned, and one may assume that a group's primary significance must have been one of them. In this respect content must ultimately have played a role. Group by group, there is certainly room for speculation on this point and the testing of such speculations. As an example, a group of texts tangibly linked to the later Greco-Roman Hour Vigil occurs on the west wall of the sarcophagus chamber of the pyramids of Pepi I, Merenre, and Pepi II, thus immediately adjacent to the sarcophagus. It could be supposed that these texts, like the Hour Vigil, involved a ritual carried out around the corpse prior to the actual interment.[130] Assuming this is so, the group's primary significance made it especially appropriate to be placed as closely as possible to the mummy in the sarcophagus.

To indulge once more in the vice of attempting to divine the intentions of silent editors, it may be further supposed that physical pragmatics played an important role. Above all, the textual length of a group of texts had to be balanced against the different sizes of available surfaces. For example, from pyramid to pyramid the offering ritual group occurs primarily (when not exclusively) on the sarcophagus chamber *north* wall. This is remarkable, because many of the texts of the group are directly analogous to the items of offering lists, but such lists typically occur on the *east* wall when they are present in non-royal, Sixth Dynasty sarcophagus chambers.[131] Speculation can offer an explanation: whereas an offering list is small in size and can fit most anywhere, the fully written offering ritual group is large. No pyramid's east wall is large enough to contain it, while the north wall can nearly do so. The divergence in position between pyramid and non-royal tomb may be explained by the pragmatics of length and space.

One last factor bearing on the positioning of groups has already been noted and demonstrated: tradition. After Unis, decisions took place in the context of an existing history, and allegiance to precedent was thereafter a general rule. A pyramid tended to position its copy of a text on the surface where it had previously been placed. But, as seen in part above, this rule could be broken. A text may stay on the same surface from one pyramid to the next but change its relative order within its group, or be moved to a different surface in a different room. Even whole groups of texts could be moved to a different wall or room according to a principle of displacement. One pertinent example of this kind is the group just now associated with the Hour Vigil.[132] As plausible as it may have sounded that the texts of this group were placed as close as possible to the corpse in sympathy with their primary locale of performance, thus on the *sarcophagus chamber* west wall, the group actually makes its first appearance in the

128 As observed by J. Leclant (*Recherches dans la pyramide et au temple haut du pharaon Pépi Ier, à Saqqarah*, Leiden, 1979, p. 7-8), it is evident that the inscriptions were not positioned in a disorderly fashion; rather, surfaces contain discernible groups of related texts, with surfaces thus seeming to exhibit a certain thematic unity. See similarly Osing, "Zur Disposition der Pyramidentexte", p. 143. For an overview of the membership and thematic content of the major groups of texts in the sarcophagus chambers of royal pyramids, see Hays, "Old Kingdom Sacerdotal Texts", p. 51-59.

129 This and the following paragraph were stimulated by a discussion I had with C.M. Sheikholeslami.

130 See the discussion of "Group D" at Hays, *loc. cit*.

131 Lapp, *Typologie der Särge und Sargkammern*, p. 12 and 14.

132 See the preceding note.

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pyramid of Teti, where it is placed on the *antechamber* west wall. The movement of groups and texts from one pyramid to the next suggests that no single factor was always decisive in determining placement. Decisions were made according to what may be presumed to be a set of competing reasons, including tradition, pragmatics, and primary significance.

Two further principles of organization deserve mention: addition and omission. Texts were not only moved about, but added to and subtracted from the whole repertoire. Together with displacement, the addition and omission of texts from one pyramid to the next shows that organization was dynamic, yielding major differences between the pyramids.[133] The dynamic history of organization would have required a dynamic manner of reading. With no canon of organization, there can have been no canon of reading.

In summary, Pyramid Texts were organized according to the following points. Texts already in existence in contexts outside the tomb were selected because of their relevance to the corpse which was housed in the crypt. The traditional two-room division created a pre-existing organizational division into two, and texts were generally split between the rooms according to their original category of use. On individual surfaces, groups can be discerned, and there are thematic commonalities and differences between them which point to their primary significance. Primary significance, pragmatics, and tradition were among the factors governing the specific positioning of groups and their constituent texts. But the tendency to maintain position from one pyramid to the next could always be overruled by a principle of displacement. Along with the addition and omission of texts in groups, and the addition and omission of entire groups, the deviations from tradition are the clearest sign of a dynamic process of organization unfolding over the course of the end of the Old Kingdom.

In its manifold character, the energy driving the organization of texts is akin to the energy which generated their composition, for the texts consisted of layers of diverse metaphors related in their purpose of bringing about a renewal of life after death. Within this discursive body, the structure of the pyramid was symbolically conceptualized and configured toward this aim. To die and be interred was to return to the womb and to go to the sky; to die and be interred was to become the very pyramid itself.

133 The principles of displacement, addition, and omission are demonstrated at Hays, *op. cit.*, p. 52-53 and 60-61.

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