KING AND OFFICIALS IN THE OLD KINGDOM

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ABSTRACTS
Conference organized within the SNSF-project:

*Monumental Discourse in 3d millennium BCE Egypt: image, writing, text.*

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With the support of:
‘The Living God’?
Prof. James P. Allen, Brown University

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The reign of Snofru and the multiplier effect at the beginning of the Fourth Dynasty
Prof. Miroslav Bártta, Charles University - Prague

For modern scholarship, the reign of Snofru (ca 2543-2510 BC) has always stood a bit in shadow of his son Khufu, the builder of the Great Pyramid in Giza. Yet it was during Snofru’s reign when most important innovations which largely changed the society of the day and largely influenced the course of the Fourth Dynasty, be it the administration of the state, the material culture or the religion, took place. Starting with the new template of the royal pyramid complex and the tombs of high officials and the cemeteries in general, through major reorganisation of administration of the state, to the introduction of new types of artefacts loaded with specific symbolical meaning, all these achievements indicate that during his reign the whole society underwent a leap change which can be best described as a multiplier effect.

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Loyalty to the King on Private Tomb Façades: between Individual Ostentation and Subordination to the Royal Authority
Romane Betbeze, Université de Genève / École Pratique des Hautes Études - Paris

During the Old Kingdom, private tomb chapels, especially their façade, were supports for high officials’ self-representation, which was
conveyed in particular by ‘staging’ the relationship between the tomb owner and the king.

Indeed, being included in the royal sphere was a dual characteristic, both homogenizing – integration into the elite culture – and discriminating – distinction from this very elite. However, the king’s iconographic representation did not seem to be part of the private tombs decorum from this period; other strategies – spatial, architectural, textual – were therefore set up in order to suggest the royal authority, for example ‘staging’ the official’s loyalty to his master.

We will see that loyalty was a rewarding quality, upon which an image of the official as acting for a hierarchical superior could be created, while placing him as the center of his own inscriptive program. We will also try to understand why this quality was very often represented in the area of the tomb façade, which was the first place to be approached by ‘passers-by-receptors’ of this self-representation.

Pharaonic Appropriation: Signs of Adaptation in the Pyramid Texts
Prof. Susanne Bickel, Universität Basel

Royal and non-royal funerary destiny are mostly considered as two different visions of afterlife. Research mainly focusses on the Pyramid Texts as sources for the reconstruction of royal otherworldly expectations. Private people’s expectations are much more difficult to access through the extant documentation. This, however, should not be taken as an indication of absence of more widely accepted concepts of funerary destiny. Recent research has highlighted the long and complex tradition underlying the various parts of the Pyramid Texts, and pointed to textual material with an origin and use-life outside the Pyramid Texts, as well as to rituals performed for both non-royals and kings. A scrutiny of non-royal tombs also reveals hints to conceptions
that parallel the royal funerary expectations, but which were obviously not central in the decoration of non-royal tombs, where other themes were relevant. The Pyramid Texts contain numerous statements that appear in striking discrepancy to the royal subject and putative royal funerary expectations. The collection and analysis of such statements seem to indicate processes of appropriation of ideas and text material relating to the private sphere and to their adaptation for the purpose of royal use. This still ongoing approach will have two outcomes: it will further our understanding of non-royal funerary conceptions and expectations during the Old Kingdom, and it will give new insights into different ways of dealing with ideas and/or texts in order to make them suitable for a pharaoh.

Followers of Horus? Elites in Early Dynastic Egypt

Beryl Büma, Universität Bonn

The emergence of the territorial state at the end of the 4th millennium led to a reorganization of Egyptian society with the new ruler Nar-mer as its sole centre and point of reference. In the context of this reorganization, the question arises as to the fate of the local elites and rulers of the protodynastic chiefdoms and regional kingdoms that were absorbed into the new state. Their integration into the new administrative system, techniques for securing their loyalty, changes in their self-image and self-representation and their practical role in the new unified Egyptian state will be addressed in this paper.
The courtly milieu in the Old Kingdom
Prof. Richard Bussmann, Universität Köln

The tombs and titles of Old Kingdom officials provide a vast amount of data for the study of the royal court in the Old Kingdom. Only a few attempts have been made to synthesize the material beyond discussions of administrative structure and the state. This paper explores diachronic changes of the courtly milieu as a whole from the Fourth to the Sixth Dynasty. The focus will be placed on changing strategies of display among kings and courtiers. Explanation of the patterns observed is sought in dynamics unfolding over time within a maturing community at court.

The economy of tomb construction and the analysis of societal display of private-royal separation and interaction in Old Kingdom tomb architecture
Dr. Violaine Chauvet, University of Liverpool

Missions royales et missions privées : la place du commanditaire des expéditions à Hatnoub dans les inscriptions de la VIe dynastie
Dr. Yannis Gourdon, Archeological mission Hatnub

Si les premières inscriptions datées de la Carrière P de Hatnoub remontent à Khéops, il faut attendre le règne de Téti pour voir apparaître les premiers récits d’expédition. Le formulaire introductif des textes de la VIe dynastie place toujours le roi comme le commanditaire explicite ou implicite des opérations. Cependant, dès Mérenrê Ier au plus tard, de hauts fonctionnaires sont parfois désignés
comme étant les initiateurs d’expéditions, dont la production ne semble pas nécessairement destinée à la capitale. Cette évolution laisse entrevoir l’existence de nouveaux circuits d’écoulement des marchandises, sinon d’une exploitation « privée » de la Carrière P qui semble alors jouir d’un statut tout-à-fait singulier au sein des carrières et mines exploitées durant l’Ancien Empire.

Beloved of the king, of his body: The sacredness of the royal person in Old Kingdom inscriptions

Julia Hamilton, University of Oxford

This paper will analyse material and semantic aspects of Old Kingdom monumental inscriptions in which the sacredness of the king’s name and person is communicated. Funerary inscriptions in tombs of late Old Kingdom officials were carefully composed in order to emphasise certain lexical elements over others, such as the foregrounding of titles that associated the tomb-owner with the king’s person, or which included the king’s name(s) bounded within a cartouche. This pattern is observable at the level of the individual text register, but also within the wider spatial arrangement of a monument’s textual programme. This same emphasis is found within basilophoric personal names that retain the cartouche in their inscribed form, preserving the royal name (ergo, the royal person) from the more profane elements the text. The corpus of erased or usurped inscriptions in the Teti Pyramid Cemetery offers interesting examples with which this material expression of the sacredness of the king’s name can be analysed. In particular, erased inscriptions from the 6th Dynasty chapel of Meryteti, Saqqara, in which the cartouche (from a title or basilophoric personal name) appears to have been left deliberately intact or reintegrated into a new inscription with mixed hands and mixed media, will be discussed.
From city to capital. Thoughts on the development of Memphis as the primary center of the early Pharaonic state

Prof. Christiana Köhler, Universität Wien

According to historical sources (e.g. Herodotus, Manetho) the city that later came to be known as Memphis was founded at the beginning of the 1st Dynasty, when the Pharaonic state of Egypt was established. The city’s first Egyptian name, of which there were several to follow over the next 3000 years or so, was White Walls (Egyptian: \textit{inb.w hgd.w}) and is in evidence from around the time of its historically narrated foundation. Other written sources suggest that it soon became the capital of the 1st Lower Egyptian nome, or the ‘Memphite nome’, which was a district within the overall Egyptian administrative system that was to develop from then on.

There is indeed some archaeological evidence that would provide general support to this historical narrative, but to date only the contours of the development of this ancient city are discernible. The evidence suggests that the region was already inhabited in prehistoric times, which is well explained by its advantageous situation by the river, its branching out into the Nile Delta, and the then ecologically rich mountainous hinterlands. There is a steep rise in archeological sites and in population density towards the end of the 4th Millennium B.C.E., which seems to be accompanied by the emergence of elites and the area’s ever increasing significance for interregional exchange. This, however, would indicate that a process of centralization and urbanization had already started some time before the 1st Dynasty.

Importantly, the development of the city of Memphis is closely interrelated with the emergence of the Egyptian territorial state. By the time the 1st Dynasty kings had brought the Egyptian Nile Valley under their political control (around 3100 B.C.E.) the region of Memphis was densely inhabited. It thus provided the human resources and a degree of infrastructure required to build up and populate the primary center of this new, vast polity that stretched from the 1st Nile cataract in the south down the river to the Mediterranean coast. As the city’s
population continued to grow during the Early Dynastic Period, it also
developed in terms of its economic and social complexity. There is
evidence for numerous governmental, administrative, economic and
religious institutions and their staff that would indicate that the city
eventually assumed the role of a primary center in the early state.
Memphis gained further importance as the kings of the 2\textsuperscript{nd} Dynasty
decided to abandon their ancestral royal necropolis in the south at
Abydos in favor of the already well-established elite necropolis at
Saqqara, a move that laid the foundation for the royal pyramid
complexes of the Old Kingdom.

This paper will examine the archaeological and inscriptional evidence
from this crucial time period and will outline the state of knowledge
relevant to the rise of Memphis as Egypt’s first capital city.

Obfuscate or Elucidate? Our (facile?) Use of the Term ‘Elite’ and the
(distant?) King’s Two Bodies

Dr. Mark Lehner, AERA / University of Chicago

Stemming from research at the Heit el-Ghurab site of 4\textsuperscript{th} Dynasty
settlement and infrastructure for building Egypt’s largest pyramids, a
site that bespeaks top-down control by central authorities, this paper
will begin to look critically at scholars’ use of the term ‘elite’ against
the distribution of material culture at the HeG and other sites. How
does the term ‘elite’ apply in candid textual windows onto the
everyday life and operations of pyramid builders, like the Inspector
Merer from the Wadi el-Jarf Papyri, or the life and operations of a
(middle class?) farmer like Hekanakht, from his papyri? Although this
last example, and other crucial examples, are post Old Kingdom, they
help us think about Old Kingdom differences in wealth and status by
asking: Do we not see extreme separation between an elite and a broad,
common class in planned housing at the town of Illahun, or on the
recently excavated common burials at Amarna, set against tombs of
high-status officials, to say nothing of royalty in that period? Does facile use of the term ‘elite’, and our ready acceptance of royal propaganda in text and materiality veil the true social-economic texture of ancient Egyptian society, a texture we see in the Intermediate Periods? Can Ernst Kantorowicz’s study of medieval kingship, *The King’s Two Bodies*, help us understand Egyptian kingship?

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*Royal Authority and Local Management in the Third Nome of Upper Egypt*

Noémie Monbaron, Université de Genève

Royal authority, provincial administration, and local temples were important actors during the Old Kingdom, but their individual role and their interdependencies remain unclear. The Third Nome of Upper Egypt offers a unique point of view to consider these questions, because of the existence of several cities in this region. Each of them seems to have a specific relationship with Memphis and presents its own set of administrative and economic features. Moreover, the location of the main provincial authority is difficult to identify, which makes it more challenging to understand regional management. Different case studies will be investigated in order to better comprehend the organization of the Third Nome throughout the Old Kingdom and examine whether it diverges from other provinces.

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On Prestigious Missions in Quarries: Individuals’ Writing Practices and the Royal Sphere

Vincent Morel, Université de Genève / École Pratique des Hautes Études - Paris / Yale University

In the Eastern Desert and Sinai Quarries, far from the Nile Valley, royal emissaries were sent forth on expeditions of great importance, highly symbolic events ordered by Pharaoh himself, the goal of which was to remove restricted resources. From the early Dynastic to the end of the Old Kingdom, several officials engraved their testimonies on various quarry rockfaces, bearing witness to their coming. While occasionally mentioning relationships with their relatives and co-workers, they also displayed – at times and according to the evolution of local writing practices – their obedience to their remote royal master. Endowed with a prestigious status as emissaries on a mission, some of these dignitaries – through various means which will be discussed – staged and celebrated their close relationship with the royal sphere.

Ideals versus Realpolitik?: Egyptian officialdom in the light of the ‘Teaching for Merykare’

Dr. Juan Carlos Moreno García, CNRS - Paris

The titles, biographies and iconography from the Old Kingdom display an ideal ethos of good and efficient rule, hierarchy and ordered world centered around the king and revolving around his own decisions and will. However, there is also ample evidence that conflicts of interest and particular interests also marked the intervention of the officials in the “public” sphere. That is why the Teaching for Merykare, despite its much debated date, provides a
unique insight into the realities of power and the limits of royal action, particularly in a world in which kings had to cope with powerful potentates, both at the court and in the provinces, and take into account their political agendas.

Überschreitung ins Liminale durch Ausweitung der Darstellbarkeits-konventionen im Alten Reich – Eine Komposit–hieroglyphe als funeräres Mythogramm

Prof. Ludwig Morenz, Universität Bonn

From the royal house to the court: ‘trickle-down’ in the funerary practices of the Old Kingdom

Dr. Gaultier Mouron, Université de Genève

A few offering scenes discovered among the remains of funerary and solar temples of the Old Kingdom were also found on the walls of private tombs. These tombs primarily belonged to officials who were related to or closely associated with the King. Starting from this focal point, this paper aims to present the transformations of royal funerary practices in the preparation of non-royal tombs and the repercussions of such adaptations during the Old Kingdom.

Proximity and Distance. Spatial patterns of tomb location and court society in the Fifth Dynasty Memphite necropolis

Dr. Massimiliano Nuzzolo, Charles University - Prague

One of the most explored issues in Egyptology is ‘the tomb’ in its being the micro-cosmos of the individual in both the society and the
afterlife. Tombs have been approached from a textual and visual perspective by investigating their artistic facets, their architectural layout, their funerary equipment. However, a less investigated point of the past scholarship on tombs is the tomb topography. This is a very promising avenue of research when we consider the striking differences that emerge from the analysis of the planning of the 3 main cemeteries of the Memphite necropolis – namely Saqqara, Abusir and Giza – in the time span into account in this paper, that’s the Fifth Dynasty. By crossing data pertaining the natural environment and landscape phenomenology (visibility, accessibility, position, interrelation) of the tombs in the above sites, with the exploration of their main features (size and orientation of tombs, titles of tomb owners, architectural and decorative elements of the tombs), the present paper will finally move to the main methodological and theoretical question: ‘May spatial patterns of tomb location reveal aspects of the nature of the Fifth Dynasty court society – and its relationship with the central power embodied by the king – that are not accessible through the sole written and visual sources?’

Far from the capital. Expressing affiliation and distinction to the royal sphere in Old Kingdom provincial tombs

Aurélie Quirion, Université de Genève

Far from the capital and from royal monuments, provincial necropoles are built in Egypt throughout the Old Kingdom. But it is not until the end of the Vth dynasty that the highest elites of these regions adopted in their tombs the modes of decoration (images and texts) that were used in the Memphite necropoles. The scenes depicted in their tombs are then very similar to those of the Memphite private tombs and thus represent a way to assert their affiliation to the central elites and to the royal authority. Nevertheless, they also reveal adaptations and
innovations that tend to mark an opposite tendency: their images show divergences of style and their texts abound of local *deixis*, expressing their local identity and thus distinguishing them from the capital.


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\textit{Working for the King: Current Understandings of Old Kingdom Phyle Organization}

Prof. Ann Macy Roth, New York University

The institution of Egyptian phyles (\(z3w\)) in the Old Kingdom was quite different from the system known in the Middle Kingdom and later. Apart from the differences in its structure and the names of the groups, it extended into much higher levels of officials, it was involved in organizing more important projects (notably pyramid construction), and it was more closely tied to the king than in later periods. Officials serving in royal mortuary cults were clearly members of phyles, and the system was probably also used to organize functionaries in the palace, as was almost certainly the case in the Archaic Period. Beginning in the mid-Fifth Dynasty, the system was appropriated and adapted by high officials to staff the cult services in their tombs. As a result, membership in a phyle may have been almost universal among Old Kingdom elite officials.

These conclusions about Old Kingdom phyles derive from my dissertation and subsequent book investigating the institution in the Archaic Period and Old Kingdom (\textit{Egyptian Phyles in the Old Kingdom: The Evolution of a System of Social Organization}, \textit{SAOC} 48, Chicago, 1991). In the thirty years since the completion of that research, new information relevant to these questions has appeared in papyrus archives (notably the Neferefre papyri and the Journal of Merer from Wadi el-Jarf) and in some of the many tombs that have been excavated at Giza, Abu Sir, and Saqqara. Lehner’s excavations in the Heit al-Gurob area have also clarified some of the circumstances related to phyles engaged in pyramid building. This
paper will evaluate and revise my earlier reconstruction of the system of phyles as a whole and evaluate some of my more speculative ideas about the institution in the light of the new evidence.

Inscribing Royal Speech in Non-Royal Tombs

Prof. Julie Stauder-Porchet, Université de Genève

During the Fifth Dynasty, a number of continuous texts in non-royal tombs include, center around, or consist entirely of, royal speech. In several such inscriptions, royal speech is framed by a narratively developed ceremonial setting that involves the official (e.g., Werre, Kaimtjenenet, Washptah). As a comparison with the netting inscription on Sahure’s causeway, for instance, makes clear, this tradition is a royal innovation. As metatextual markers in the inscriptions themselves make clear, the inscriptions (both as texts and as material artifacts) are gifts by the king and authorized by the king. Through these inscriptions, the king’s voice enters a space—the non-royal funerary chapel—in which the king is otherwise present only indirectly. By the time of Izezi, inscriptions of royal speech diversify further, experimenting with a series of formats including complex multi-episodic narrative (Kaimtjenenet) and rhetorically wrought letters (letters to Shepsesre and Senedjemib-Inti). Just after, they disappear altogether, giving way to early exponents of the so-called “event autobiography.” In this genre, royal speech remains in fact present, if subcutaneously, in the central mention of royal praise; singular revivals, such as the royal letter on Harkhuf’s facade and shorter segments in Sabni son of Mekhu’s autobiography, make this enduring connection even more explicit. Overall, the development of continuous narrative text in non-royal tombs thus appears to have its origins in royal inscriptions. The inscription of royal speech, with its full performative force, was key. The shift to the event autobiography, during the later Fifth Dynasty, took place among a series of other
adaptations and appropriations by the inner elite, also manifest in the pictorial domain.

Khufu’s teams of workers from the Wadi el-Jarf papyri
Prof. Pierre Tallet, Université Paris Sorbonne

The recently discovered papyri from the Wadi el-Jarf are the archive of a team of workers that was involved all year long in several tasks to the benefit of the monarchy: from the records they were keeping every and each day on logs, we can see them bringing blocks of limestone from Tura to Giza (Papyrus A and B) building a stone structure—probably a harbour—in the Delta (Papyrus C), and attending different institutions, among them probably the Valley Temple of the King (Papyrus D). Those teams, which usually use basilophoric names, appear to be very close to the power, and are often called ‘setep sa’ (the Elite?) in those documents—an expression which is also used to designate the Court of the King.

The ideological background of the ‘royal command’ (wḏ nsw)
Prof. Pascal Vernus, École Pratique des Hautes Études - Paris

Via a ‘royal command’ (wḏ nsw), the pharaoh Neferkaouhor orders to a high official to join another official, the powerful overseer of Upper Egypt Shemai and to formalize in writing a properly organization of the allocations pertaining to an estate of Min of Koptos.

Via a ‘royal command’ (wḏ nsw), the pharaoh Izezi gives a soft-soaping answer to a no less soft-soaping congratulatory letter sent to him by a high official.
Comparing these two documents illustrates how the ‘royal command’ form can involve different kinds of relationships between the pharaoh and the high officials.

To account for the wide relevance of the deed of power termed ‘royal command’ ($w\text{"}{\textit{d}}\text{\textit{nsw}}$) in pharaonic Egypt, the paper aims at delineating the ideological background that underpins it, and at highlighting its specificity. A particular emphasis will be put on the difference between $w\text{"}{\textit{d}}\text{\textit{nsw}}$ and $w\text{"}{\textit{d}}\text{\textit{mdw}}$, and a caveat will be formulated against their confusion.

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**Harkhuf and the Language of Kings**

Prof. Deborah Vischak, Princeton University

The tomb of Harkhuf, an elite official of the late Old Kingdom, sits high on the cliff at Qubbat al-Hawa near ancient Elephantine. A lengthy autobiography describing Harkhuf’s journeys into Nubia covers the façade of this small chapel, paired with the highly unusual copy of a letter from the young Pepy II to Harkhuf. This monument’s renown lies primarily in the content of these texts, as they provide rich resources for considering the relationships between provincial officials and the king during the Old Kingdom, but the formal aspects of the tomb equally suggest evidence for how these relationships functioned among the provincial elite. This paper will examine how the form of this tomb, in particular the use of inscriptions as visual signs, speaks to how Harkhuf conceived and negotiated his connection to the king through his monument. His tomb interacts with multiple, shifting networks of audience, material culture, social experience, and political practice, and this paper will consider these networks and how Harkhuf’s connection to the king plays a persistent though variable role throughout.