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Thoth in the Pyramid Texts

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## ABSTRACT

Cílem této práce je zhodnotit úlohu boha Thovta ve staroegyptských Textech pyramid, tělese zádušní literatury doložené zejména z podzemních místností pyramid králů a královen páté a šesté dynastie. Toto téma je zpracováno ve dvou částech na základě dělení H. M. Hayse: první se věnuje Thovtu v osobních textech, které jej líčí jako měsíční božstvo a přechodovou postavu, druhá textům kněžským, kde je zkoumána jeho úloha v mýtu o Horu a Usirovi. Bohova funkce v obou těchto skupinách je vyložena jeho povahou prostředníka mezi rozličnými prvky božského světa zejména skrze množství konkrétních zjištění o jednotlivých motivech, ve kterých boha lze v Textech pyramid nalézt. Práce je zakončena shrnutím těchto poznatků a Thovtovy povahy.

The purpose of the present work is to evaluate the role of the god Thoth in the Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts, a corpus of funerary literature found most prominently in the underground chambers of the pyramids of the kings and queens of the 5th and 6th dynasty. Following the division made by H. M. Hays, the topic is treated in two parts: the first is concerned with Thoth in the personal texts, where he is presented as a lunar deity and a transition figure, the second with the sacerdotal texts, studying his position in the myth of Osiris and Horus. The function of the god in both is shown to stem from his role as a mediator between the various elements of the divine world, mainly through a number of particular findings with regard to the individual motifs in which Thoth is found in the Pyramid Texts. The work concludes with a summary of these findings and an outline of Thoth's nature in the corpus.



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I would also like to offer my thanks to Doc. Radek Chlup, PhD. Since the very beginning of my life in the academia have his classes been an irreplaceable source of knowledge and it is to him that I owe most of what I've learned about religion. He also has my gratitude for his course of the ancient Greek language, a veritable rite of initiation, the value of which to me is immense.





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## ABBREVIATIONS

<i>ACDF</i>	<i>Annuaire du Collège de France</i>
<i>ASAE</i>	<i>Annales du Service des Antiquités de l'Égypte</i>
<i>BIFAO</i>	<i>Bulletin de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale</i>
<i>BSFE</i>	<i>Bulletin de la Société Française d'Égyptologie</i>
<i>CdE</i>	<i>Chronique d'Égypte</i>
<i>DE</i>	<i>Discussions in Egyptology</i>
<i>FIFAO</i>	<i>Fouilles de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale</i>
<i>JARCE</i>	<i>Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt</i>
<i>JNES</i>	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
<i>Lae</i>	<i>Lingua Aegyptia</i>
<i>HoR</i>	<i>History of Religions</i>
<i>RHR</i>	<i>Revue de l'histoire des religions</i>
<i>SAK</i>	<i>Studien zur altägyptischen Kultur</i>
<i>Wb</i>	<i>Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache</i>
<i>ZÄS</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde</i>



## **INTRODUCTION: THOTH AND THE PYRAMID TEXTS**

The present work is devoted to the understanding of the role of the god Thoth in the ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts. The task at hand is twofold, one aspect of the work consisting mainly of gathering and organizing the numerous references to Thoth scattered throughout the extensive corpus of the Pyramid Texts. A significant part of this work will thus concern itself with identifying various religious motifs and classifying the relevant spells in such a way that would turn the vastness of the source material into a more manageable pattern.

The other goal of this thesis is to find a common idea of Thoth hidden within the many instances that the first direction of study will amass, to reconstruct a single Thoth of the Pyramid Texts from the multitude of Thothes of the individual motifs and spells. A unifying principle of the god's nature will be sought, one that will hopefully shed some light not only on the particular life of a deity of a long-dead epoch of a long-dead religion, but also on the more general patterns of thought that pervade human religion. With a little bit of luck will the reader of this work find himself enriched not only with the trivia of the Pyramid Age, but also with a more profound understanding of the religious phenomena that he or she might encounter in their scholarly pursuits.

### **THE PYRAMID TEXTS**

The Pyramid Texts are the oldest collection of religious texts preserved from ancient Egypt. While many of the individual spells are probably of considerably earlier origin, they are first attested in the pyramid of Wenis at the end of the 5th dynasty (ca. 2350 B.C.E.). Selections of spells were found in all the later royal pyramids of the Old Kingdom. The spells themselves are located in the pyramids' subterranean chambers, especially the sarcophagus chambers and their antechambers. In the case of Teti I the sarcophagus is also inscribed and from Pepi I on the writing also starts to be present on the walls of the subterranean corridor. During the reign of Pepi II at the end of the Old Kingdom the Pyramid Texts also appeared inside the substructure of queens' pyramids. The ten sets attested from the Old Kingdom belong to the pyramids of kings Wenis, Teti, Pepi I, Merenre, Pepi II, Ibi and those of queens Ankhesenpepi, Wedjebten, Neith and Iput.

Most of the texts of Unis, Teti, Pepi I, were discovered by Gaston Maspero, who excavated the pyramids in 1880 and 1881, beginning an edition and translation of the texts the following year. The definitive text edition as of now is that composed by Kurt Sethe in 1908. This has of course been expanded by earlier research, most notably Gustave Jéquier's securing of further spells of Pepi II in southern Saqqara, where he also discovered the versions of the queens Wedjebten, Neith and Iput. The work of Jean-Phillipe Lauer, Jean Sainte-Fare Garnot and Jean Leclant begun in the 50s also managed to greatly expand the corpus with fragments recovered from the pyramids of Teti, Pepi I and Merenre.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The first report of the Pyramid Texts' discovery was published by Heinrich Karl Brugsch, *ZÄS* 19 (1881), p. 1–15. The first text edition is Gaston Maspero, *Les*

Individual spells differ in size, all lack illustrations and also titles with the exception of spell 355. All the columns are marked with the notation "recitation" (*dd-mdw*), which also serves as a heading of all the spells of Wenis' corpus. The spells' ends are marked by the hieroglyph "enclosure" (*hw.t*) except for those of Wenis, which terminate with a horizontal line. The total number of spells in the corpus differs from author to author and has risen steadily since the edition of Sethe, who distinguished 714 spells. Faulkner increased this number to 759 and Hays incorporated 821 different Pyramid Texts into his work on their organization, Allen also having more than 800 in his yet unpublished new concordance.

The numbering of spells in this thesis will reflect that of Allen's Concordance, which

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*inscriptions des Pyramides de Saqqarah*, Bouillon: Paris, 1894, 458 p. The definitive edition was published by Kurt Sethe beginning in 1908 as Kurt Sethe, *Die altägyptische Pyramidentexte*, Leipzig: Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 4 vols., 1908–1922. This edition is supplemented by the edition of the South Saqqara texts in Gustave Jéquier, *Fouilles à Saqqarah: La pyramide d'Oudjebten*, Cairo: Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 1928, 31 p.; *Fouilles à Saqqarah: Les pyramides des reines Neit et Apouit*, Cairo: Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 1933, 60 p.; *La pyramide d' Aba*, Cairo: Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 1935, 38 p.; *Fouilles à Saqqarah: Le monument funéraire de Pepi II*, Cairo: Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 1940, 190 p. Further work of the French excavations in the latter half of the century was published in Jean S. F. Garnot, "Nouveaux textes de la pyramide de Téli", in *Mélanges Mariette*, Cairo: Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 1961, p. 169–171; Jean Leclant, "Fouilles et travaux en Égypte et au Soudan", *Orientalia* 42 (1966), pls. 8–10; "Fouilles et travaux en Égypte et au Soudan", *Orientalia* 42 (1973), pls. 13–15; "Fouilles et travaux en Égypte et au Soudan", *Orientalia* 45 (1976), pls. 26–27; "Fouilles et travaux en Égypte et au Soudan", *Orientalia* 48 (1977), pl. 12; "Les textes de la pyramide de Pépi Ier (Saqqara): Reconstitution de la paroi est de l'antichambre", *Comptes rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* (1977), p. 269–288; (ed.), *Les textes de la pyramide de Pépy Ier*, 2 vols., Cairo: Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 2001; Cathérine Berger, Jean Leclant, "Les textes de la pyramide de Téli, état des travaux", in Cathérine Berger, Bernard Mathieu (eds.), *Études sur l'Ancien Empire et la nécropole de Saqqâra dédiées à Jean-Phillipe Lauer*, Montpellier: Université Paul Valéry, 1997, p. 271–277; Alexander Piankoff, *The Pyramid of Unas*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968, xiv + 118 p. A notable work in progress is Allen, James P. *A New Concordance of the Pyramid Texts*, 6 vols, Providence: Brown University, July 8, 2013 [cit. 2015–1–9], accessible at [https://www.dropbox.com/sh/oxo88uy04urnz0v/o16\\_ojF8f\\_](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/oxo88uy04urnz0v/o16_ojF8f_).

The key sources of the later occurrences of the Pyramid Texts are Thomas George Allen, *Occurrences of Pyramid Texts with Cross Indexes of These and Other Egyptian Mortuary Texts*, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1950, vii + 149 p.; James P. Allen, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts Vol. 8: Middle Kingdom Copies of Pyramid Texts*, Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2006, xv + 456 p. Of the works cited in this note only the ones cited elsewhere in this thesis are included in the bibliography at the end of this work.

is also considered the Pyramid Texts' critical edition here together with edition of Pepi I's pyramid created by MAFS (Mission archéologique française de Saqqâra) under the direction of Jean Leclant. Unless stated otherwise, the translations of the Pyramid Texts presented here are those of Allen's *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts* edited by Peter Der Manuelian.<sup>2</sup> This translation has the advantage of being the newest one in English and benefits from the advances in understanding of both language and religion.<sup>3</sup> The fact that Allen is also the author of one of the more cited Old Egyptian grammars,<sup>4</sup> *The Inflection of the Verb in the Pyramid Texts* and also of the newest concordance of the Old Kingdom corpus, *A New Concordance of the Pyramid Texts*. The main difference from the translation of Allen is the decision to replace the royal names used by Allen with the word

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- 2 The signs (phrase) mark text not found in the original, but included for the purposes of comprehensibility or stylistics. Parts of translated text omitted for the sake of brevity are marked with ( ... ). Reconstructed sections of the translation are rendered [phrase].
- 3 The prominent translations of the Pyramid Texts are Raymond O. Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts: Translated in to English*, 2 vols., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969; Samuel A. B. Mercer, *The Pyramid Texts in Translation and Commentary*, 4 vols., New York: Longmans, 1952; Alexandre Piankoff, *The Pyramid of Unas*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, xiv + 118 p.; Kurt Sethe, *Übersetzung und Kommentar zu den altägyptischen Pyramidentexten*, 6 vols, Hamburg: Augustin; James P. Allen, Peter Der Manuelian (ed.), *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005, x + 471 p. Apart from the translation of Allen, the work of Faulkner is also used here, his commentaries often being quite insightful. His translation, while often outdated, also provides interesting alternatives to Allen's, which are explored at some points in this thesis. Of the works cited in this note only the ones cited elsewhere in this thesis are included in the bibliography at the end of this work.
- 4 Important studies on the topic of grammar of Pyramid Texts Egyptian are Constantin Emil Sanders-Hansen, *Studien zur Grammatik der Pyramidentexte*, Copenhagen: E. Munksgaard, 1956, 239 p.; Elmar Edel *Altägyptische Grammatik*, 2 vols., Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1964; James P. Allen, *The Inflection of the Verb in the Pyramid Texts*, Malibu: Undena Publications, 1984, 768 p. On the topic of stylistic, see Otto Firchow, *Grundzüge der Stilistik in den altägyptischen Pyramidentexte*, Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1953, 256 p. On sign suppression and modification, see Pierre Lacau, *ZÄS* 51 (1913): 1–64. On graphic dissimilations, see Etienne Drioton, *ASAE* 49 (1949): 57–68. The most complete and up-to-date work on the internal structure, distribution, context and character of the Pyramid Texts is Harold M. Hays, *The Organization of the Pyramid Texts*, Leiden: Brill, 2012, p. 395–396. The present thesis draws significantly upon this work of Hays'. A less extensive and older text on the same topic is Hubert Röder, "Themen und Motive in den Pyramidentexten", *LAE* 3 (1993): 81-119. On the discussion of the Pyramid Texts' distribution and its interpretation, see , J. P. Allen "Reading a Pyramid", in Cathérine Berger (ed.), *Hommages à Jean Leclant*, vol. 1, Cairo: Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, p. 5-28 and its critique, Harold M. Hays, "Unreading the Pyramids", *Bulletin de l'Institut Français Archéologie Orientale* 109 (2009): 195–220. On the key issue of the Pyramid Texts' definition interconnected with the concept of the so-called "democratization of the afterlife", see Mark Smith, "Democratization of the Afterlife", in Jacco Dieleman,

"NN", which is traditionally used by egyptologists to represent the name of the beneficiary.<sup>5</sup> The transliteration used by the present work is based on the one of Allen's *A New Concordance of the Pyramid Texts*, but employs a transliteration style different from Allen's, distinguishing between endings, marked with ".", and suffixes, marked with "-". In a number of cases the transliteration of Allen is further modified to reflect the hieroglyphic original more precisely.

This main division of this thesis will follow that made by H. M. Hays in *The Organization of the Pyramid Texts*, who distinguishes two main categories of the Pyramid Texts: personal texts and sacerdotal texts.<sup>6</sup> The difference between the two groups stems from their original context. While all the Pyramid Texts share a single, *monumental* context, as they are carved into the dark chambers of the pyramid's substructure never to be read by living souls, originally they were used by the living: some were used in temple liturgy and are termed *sacerdotal*, others were by the individual in preparation for the afterlife, which are called *personal* by Hays. Both the groups are distinguishable by both form and topic, the key difference being that the former category's texts were originally in the 2<sup>nd</sup> person, while the latter's in the 1<sup>st</sup> and although most the preserved spells are in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person, the residues of the old form can often be found.<sup>7</sup> The two categories also differ in the motifs they usually contain. For example, the apotropaic symbolism is almost exclusive to the personal category, while the sacerdotal texts largely concern themselves with the offering of various goods to the deceased. The difference is often quite remarkable and provides for a natural division of source material in the study of the Pyramid Texts. For this reason the search for Thoth will follow this distinction, the first part of the thesis being dedicated to his role in the personal texts, the other to that in the sacerdotal. As it will be seen, the two categories show the god in remarkably different ways, which, however, form but two sides of the same fundamental reality.

## **THE GOD THOTH**

Thoth himself, the subject of this study, needs little introduction as the nature of his godhood will be discussed extensively in the course of this thesis. Thoth is one of the most enduring and renowned deities of the Egyptian pantheon and is no stranger to a student of religion. His function in the Egyptian pantheon is quite rich, the god being an inventor of

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Willeke Wendrich (eds.), *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology*, Los Angeles, June 4, 2009 [cit. 2015–1–9], accessible at <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/70g428wj>; H. M. Hays, "The Death of the Democratization of the Afterlife", in Nigel Strudwick, Helen Strudwick (eds.), *Old Kingdom, New Perspectives: Egyptian Art and Archaeology 2750–2150 BC*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011, p. 115–130. Of the works cited in this note only the ones cited elsewhere in this thesis are included in the bibliography at the end of this work.

5 The present work uses the terms "King" or "the royal person" to refer to the beneficiary of the spells.

6 H. M. Hays, *The Organization of the Pyramid Texts*, p. 125–249.

7 *Ibid.*, p. 17–78.



writing and an author of numerous religious texts, a vizier of the king of the gods, a moon-god, a prominent deity in personal religion and also a divine judge renowned for both his wits and wisdom, his reconciliatory role a key element in most of the major myths of Egypt.

A number of academic studies has been focused on Thoth, reflecting the god's prominence in Egyptian religion. Most importantly, a number of monographs has been dedicated to the study of the god that form the core of the scholarly discussion about Thoth.

The first major modern study is Patrick Boylan's *Thoth: The Hermes of Egypt*.<sup>8</sup> Boylan studies Thoth mostly as a number of more or less discrete roles (Moon god, relation to the Ennead of Heliopolis, representative of Re) and gives particular attention to Thoth's creative verbosity. While Boylan's treatment lacks in unified interpretation, some of his findings are still valid, the book retaining some relevance today. The main issue with the monograph is its age as a number of important primary sources for the study of Thoth have been discovered only after its publication, among others the narrative of the *Contendings of Horus and Seth*. Nevertheless, Boylan's *Thoth* remains a convenient source for the early discussion and is often referenced in modern academic literature, as is the case in this thesis.

The next major work about Thoth is *Hathor und Thoth* by Cornelius Jouco Bleeker.<sup>9</sup> Based on the author's phenomenological method, the book treats Thoth together with Hathor in less than 180 pages, out of which only 52 are concerned with Thoth alone. Apart from the relatively condensed size of the book, the work of Bleeker is also problematic because of its premises, such as the author's resolute adherence to the idea of strict Egyptian polytheism or a lacking definition of divinity that the work seems to employ. The treatment of the source material is also at times unsatisfactory. Most importantly, Bleeker seems to reduce Thoth to his role of pacifier, not considering the other aspects of Thoth's personality properly. Consequently, Boylan's work should be preferred to Bleeker's, should the potential reader seek an older source for Thoth.

A significantly more specialized study is the publication *Thot à travers ses épithètes dans les scènes d'offrandes des temples d'époque gréco-romaine* by Maria-Theresia Derchain-Urtel.<sup>10</sup> The work is concerned with Thoth of the Ptolemaic era with particular regard to the temple offering-scenes and is thus an excellent reference point for the iconography of Thoth, particularly in the context of the temples of later periods of Egyptian history. Due to the particular focus of the work, the study is centered on Thoth in his role of a servant of Horus and Osiris and his cosmic aspect and relationship to the Sun-god is less pronounced.

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8 Patrick Boylan, *The Hermes of Egypt: A Study of Some Aspects of Theological Thought in Ancient Egypt*, London: Milford, 1922, vii + 215 p.

9 Cornelius Jouco Bleeker, *Hathor and Thoth: Two Key Figures in Ancient Egyptian Religion*, Leiden: Brill, 1973, 171 p.

10 Maria-Theresia Derchain-Urtel, *Thot à travers ses épithètes dans les scènes d'offrandes des temples d'époque gréco-romaine*, Bruxelles: Fondation égyptologique reine Élisabeth, 1981, xii + 274 p.

Another work concerned mainly with Thoth is Bernadette Menu's, *Le Tombeau de Pétoisiris (2): Maât, Thot et le droit*.<sup>11</sup> The work explores the relationship of Thoth and the cosmic order in his role of a purveyor of justice in the world as both a judge and a lawgiver. The iconography of the god is given significant attention, as the study mainly builds on the source material found in the tomb of Petosiris, a high priest of Thoth of Hermopolis from the fourth century BCE.

Another notable work is *Der Aufstieg eines Gottes: Untersuchung zum Gott Thot bis zum Beginn des Neuen Reiches* by Herbert Spiess.<sup>12</sup> The book presents a comprehensive historical survey, but its methodology makes it relatively complicated to work with, particularly in the more interpretative passages. Its treatment of Thoth as a martial deity, however, is quite insightful.

The most comprehensive and up-to-date scholarly work on Thoth is Martin Stadler's *Weiser und Wesir: Studien zu Vorkommen, Rolle und Wesen des Gottes Thot im ägyptischen Totenbuch*.<sup>13</sup> The book focuses mainly on Thoth of the Book of the Dead, but draws heavily upon other sources, effectively mapping the whole of Thoth's religious history. All the major aspects of the god are extensively commented and the book contains a number of especially valuable insights of both general and particular character, the work often giving significant attention to minor details. At the time of the writing of this thesis the work of Stadler is the most complete monograph on Thoth and is an excellent reference point for most the avenues of study of the god and is consequently heavily cited in this thesis.

A number of lesser works touch upon Thoth or his aspects. Posener's *Un dieu écrivain: Le Thot égyptien* studies him in his role of vizier, judge and a divine writer and emphasizes the tradition of Thoth as a body-part of Re, most notably his heart.<sup>14</sup> The role of Thoth in the writing of divine letters is treated by Jan Quagebeur, *Lettered de Thoth et Décrets pour Osiris*.<sup>15</sup> Thoth as a god of speech is studied in Youri Volokhine's, *La dieu Thot et la parole*.<sup>16</sup>

The connection of Thoth with west is commented on by Bernard Bruyère's *Fouilles de Deir el Médineh* with particular regard to his patronage over the tombs located on the

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11 Bernadette Menu, "Le Tombeau de Pétoisiris (2): Maât, Thot et le droit", *BIFAO* 95 (1995): 281–295.

12 Herbert Spiess, *Der Aufstieg eines Gottes: Untersuchung zum Gott Thot bis zum Beginn des Neuen Reiches*, Hamburg: published privately, 1991, v + 260 p.

13 Martin Stadler, *Weiser und Wesir: Studien zu Vorkommen, Rolle und Wesen des Gottes Thot im ägyptischen Totenbuch*, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009, xvi + 541.

14 Georges Posener, "Un dieu écrivain: Le Thot égyptien", *ACDF* 62 (1962): 287–290.

15 Jan Quagebeur, „Lettered de Thoth et Décrets pour Osiris", in *Essays Dedicated to Prof. M. S. H. G. Heerma van Voss*, Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1988, p. 105–126.

16 Youri Volokhine's, "La dieu Thot et la parole", *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 221, 2004: 131–156.

western banks.<sup>17</sup> A work dedicated to the topic from the perspective of iconography is Alan H. Gardiner's *Baptism of the Pharaoh*, which is based mostly on a study of the grouping of Horus and Thoth in relief scenes.<sup>18</sup>

The most extensive study on the female companion of Thoth, the goddess Seshat, is provided by Dagmar Budde's, *Die Göttin Seschat*.<sup>19</sup>

Some of the more focused studies of the iconography of Thoth are provided by Wilmos Wessetzky's *Die Affen des Thoth*,<sup>20</sup> and Jan Quagebeur's *Les pantoufles du dieu Thot*.<sup>21</sup>

The discussion about the enigmatic name of Thoth is quite extensive and of relatively little consequence to the present work. An extensive summary of the secondary literature on the topic can be found in M. Stadler, *Weiser und Wesir*.<sup>22</sup> An accessible summary is provided by Martin Stadler's *Thoth*, a contribution to *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology*, which also serves as a structured and accessible introduction for the study of Thoth.<sup>23</sup>

Other minor works devoted to Thoth will be cited throughout this thesis, but are omitted in this summary due to their very particular focus and the issue of space. Those in need of it may find a vastly more comprehensive bibliography in Martin Stadler's *Weiser und Wesir*, which effectively summarizes the whole of the modern scholarly discussion.<sup>24</sup>

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17 Bernard Bruyère, "Fouilles de Deir el Médineh (1935-1940)", *FIFAO* 20 (1952): 94–104.

18 Alan H. Gardiner, "Baptism of the Pharaoh", *JEA* 36 (1950), p. 3–12.

19 Dagmar Budde, *Die Göttin Seschat*, Leipzig, 2000.

20 Wilmos Wessetzky, "Die Affen des Thoth", in Sylvia Schoske (ed.), *Akten des vierten internationalen ägyptologischen Kongresses München 1985*, Hamburg: Buske, 1985, 425–430.

21 Jan Quagebeur, "Les pantoufles du dieu Thot", in *Atti del VI Congresso Internazionale di Egittologia*, Torino: International Association of Egyptologists, 1992, p. 521–527.

22 M. Stadler, *Weiser und Wesir*, p. 32–34.

23 Martin Stadler, "Thoth", in Jacco Dieleman, Willeke Wendrich (eds.), *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology 1*, Los Angeles, August 11, 2012 [cit. 2015–1–9], accessible at <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/2xj8c3qg>

24 M. Stadler, *Weiser und Wesir*, p. 11–34.

## A. THE PERSONAL TEXTS: THOTH IN TRANSITION

Thoth is mentioned in a total of 63 non-fragmentary spells.<sup>25</sup> Of these 39 are classified by Hays as sacerdotal, 23 personal and one, PT 733, is unclassified. The ratio of distribution of relevant texts to the two categories corresponds to the pattern of distribution of the Pyramid Texts in general, indicating that the god was not particular to any of the two supposed corpora.

The majority of personal texts mentioning Thoth are not primarily concerned with the deity himself. Like the whole of the corpus, these spells mainly have to do with the deceased King and other characters play a role secondary to that of the beneficiary. Even compared to some of these, however, Thoth is of a relatively minor importance, being present only in a fraction of the total texts and being prominent in an even smaller part. While such a situation naturally prevents us from making a clear picture of the deity, it is possible to create a sort of a sketch by pointing out some motifs which arise in these texts in relation to Thoth.

### 1. THE WING OF THOTH

#### 1.1 GENERAL REMARKS

The motif most frequently encountered with Thoth in personal texts is that of Thoth providing transport for the King or the Eye of Horus by the means of his wing.<sup>26</sup> It is present in eight Pyramid texts: PT 270, PT 359, PT 478, PT 515, PT 531, PT 555, PT 566 and sPT 1064. In PT 615 a variant "wing of Seth" is found in a context essentially identical to several of the texts above, Hays thus coined the category of ten texts Wing of Thoth/Seth. Hays' list includes PT 327, which, however, contains no reference to neither

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25 PT 17, PT 23, PT 24, PT 25, PT 35, PT 36, PT 62, PT 71F, PT 71G, PT 71H, PT 82, PT 210, PT 217, PT 218, PT 219, PT 262, PT 270, PT 279, PT 304, PT 323, PT 327, PT 356, PT 359, PT 367, PT 368, PT 372, PT 406, PT 437, PT 448, PT 468, PT 477, PT 478, PT 505, PT 511, PT 515, PT 524, PT 526, PT 531, PT 534, PT 539, PT 542, PT 555, PT 566, PT 570, PT 576, PT 577, PT 583, PT 591, PT 600, PT 610, PT 611, PT 658, PT 665A, PT 665B, PT 665C, PT 665D, PT 669, PT 670, PT 674, PT 690, PT 694, PT 698B, PT 724, PT 733, sPT 1064.

26 For a summary and a cosmological interpretation of the Wing motif, see Hubert Röder, "Auf den Flügeln des Thot: Der Kamm des Königs Wadj und seine Motive, Themen und Interpretation in den Pyramidentexten.", in Mechthild Schade-Busch, (ed.), *Wege öffnen: Festschrift für Rolf Gundlach zum 65. Geburtstag*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1997, p. 232–252. The phrases "Wing of Thoth", "the Wing", etc. will throughout this chapter refer to the motif itself, not the deity's bodypart. Any direct references to the god's literal wing will be explicitly marked as such.

the god's wing mentioning only an "arm of Thoth", a motif distinct from the Wing.<sup>27</sup> PT 327 is therefore not considered together with the remaining member spells of Hays' typological motif 'The Wing of Thoth/Seth'. PT 615 will be, on the other hand, included, as it differs from the aforementioned spells only due to the replacement of Thoth's name, otherwise being essentially identical in both structure and content. PT 524 will also be mentioned as the Wing of the god is also referenced there, albeit in very different situation, setting the spell apart from the nine forming the motif's core texts.

All these texts belong to the sizable category of *transition spells*, which totals at 183 texts containing 126 different transition motifs, including the Wing of Thoth motif.<sup>28</sup> The texts are concerned with a variety of topics pertaining to the King, such as his attributes, actions or privileges, and, of course, movement, as he ascends, flies or crosses an otherworldly expanse,<sup>29</sup> often following the paths of divine beings to a blessed place.<sup>30</sup> The Wing of Thoth is a literary tool of transition, as the prominent divine entities of the Egyptian after-world are set upon the god's wing to move across some celestial space to what is often referred to simply as "yonder side", *gs pf* or *pf gs*.<sup>31</sup> This chapter will concern itself mainly with this function of the Wing, its relation to other motifs of transition and the overall contribution to the inner working of these spells, which relied on the symbol of the Wing to express and maintain their function as tools of the King's freedom of movement in the afterlife.<sup>32</sup>

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27 §353c: *jn.n dhw.tj NN mr=f sw jn.n n=f NN ˆ.wj=f* . While the arm may be envisioned as a metaphor for the avian limb, the use of the term "arm" (ˆ) throughout the Pyramid Texts, including some of its uses in connection with Thoth, does not allow to simply equate "arm of Thoth" with "wing of Thoth", as the arm, unlike the wing is significantly richer in meaning, being used for support, protection, and naturally manipulation. Furthermore, the Wing motif is characteristic by the use of *tp.j*, which is absent in PT 327. Overall the position of the "arm" in §353c discourages from supposing any connection between it and the Wing motif. On the arm of Thoth, see Alain Zivie, „Thot et la coudée“, *BSFE* 79 (1977): 22–41.

28 Harold M. Hays, *The Organization of the Pyramid Texts*, Leiden: Brill, 2012, p. 395–396., p. 289–290.

29 See James P. Allen, "The Cosmology of the Pyramid Texts, in James P. Allen (ed.), *Religion and Philosophy in Ancient Egypt*, New Haven: Yale University, 1989, p. 7–28. See also Jan Assmann, "Death and Initiation in the Funerary Religion of Ancient Egypt", in: William Kelly Simpson (Ed.), *Religion and Philosophy in Ancient Egypt*, 1989, p. 143. On the motif of a journey in the Pyramid Texts, see For motif of journey, see H. Röder, "Themen und Motive in der Pyramidentexten", p. 86–88.

30 H. M. Hays, *The Organization of the Pyramid Texts*, p. 395–396., p. 282.

31 PT 270, PT 515, PT 531, PT 555, sPT 1064. On the symbolic relationship of the two sides of the canal with regard to the Wing of Thoth, see H. Röder, "Auf den Flügeln des Thot", p. 248.

32 For a summary of the ascension symbolism in the Pyramid Texts, see William Morris Davis, "The Ascension-Myth in the Pyramid Texts", *JNES* 36 (1977): 161–179.

The phrase "Wing of Thoth" is present seven times in the corpus, rendered six times as *ḏnh ḏhw.tj*, once as *ḏnh n ḏhw.tj*.<sup>33</sup> There is a single instance of the dual *ḏnh.wj ḏhw.tj* ("two wings of Thoth") in PT 515. In PT 555 the wingtip (*ḥnd ḏnh*) of the god is mentioned, the word "wing-tip" (*ḥnd*) in reference to Thoth appears again in PT 566.<sup>34</sup> The term *ḥnd* also indicates that the word "wing" (*ḏnh*) was meant quite literally, as does the use of the H5 wing hieroglyph as a determinative in all the mentioned cases. This, along with the ideogram used to write the name Thoth throughout the Pyramid Texts, indicates that the avian nature of the god was established by the late Old Kingdom and the idea of a winged deity was present in the conceptual world of the Pyramid Texts, although a more metaphorical explanation for the avian terminology will be presented below. The phrase "wing of his brother Seth" (*ḏnh n sn=f stš*)<sup>35</sup> somewhat complicates the issue and will be addressed later along with other points of Seth/Thoth overlap.

## 1.2 SUMMARY OF THE RELEVANT SPELLS

A brief expose of the texts in question is in order. Attention will be given to variables like size and presence of secondary themes. Consideration will also be given to the way these spells are constituted of distinct elements of argumentation which make up the texts' logical structure.

PT 270 is a spell of intermediate length and a relatively simple structure. It opens with an exhortation to the celestial ferryman, who is to provide his services to the King.<sup>36</sup> The second part of the spell provides incentives for the ferryman to comply with this request: first by claiming the King's purity<sup>37</sup> and divinity<sup>38</sup> and then by threatening the ferryman that the King could just as well cross on the wing of Thoth should he withhold his services.<sup>39</sup>

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33 PT 270 §387b (indirect genitive); PT 359 §594f, §595a, §596a, PT 478 §976a-b; PT 531 §1254a; sPT 1064 (direct genitive). In PT 555 a phrase *tp.j ḥnd ḏnh=k* is present at §1377b, with the suffix pronoun referring to Thoth, who is addressed in the previous sentence with a vocative. This is also the case in PT 566, where the vocative is present in the same sentence, rendered *dš sw ḏhw.tj m tp ḥnd=k* (§1429b-c).

34 It is of note that both these phrases are found in vocatives to the god, as opposed to the *ḏnh ḏhw.tj* phrase, which is used in spells referring to the god in 3rd person.

35 §1742a.

36 §384a-b.

37 §386a-b. On the sentences of "no accusation" in PT 270, see John Gwyn Griffiths, "The Accusing Animals", in Ursula Verhoeven, Erhart Graefe (eds.), *Religion und Philosophie im Alten Ägypten*, Leuven: Peeters Press, 1991, p. 148-154. The author argues that the reference to the ox and the duck not accusing the King is a profession of proper execution of the sacrificial ritual. Faulkner instead claims that the two animals represent the whole of the animal world (*Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, p. 79, n. 5).

38 §385c.

PT 359 is a spell of significantly larger length and complexity compared to the previous one. The text can be divided into four parts, distinguishable by shifts in topic. The spell's opening sentences clearly set the whole in the context of the quarrel between the gods Horus and Seth.<sup>40</sup> As a consequence of it, the Eye of Horus crosses the celestial canal with the help of Thoth and is in turn followed by the King who seeks to intercede in the conflict for the benefit of Horus. The gods are called upon to aid in this crossing.<sup>41</sup> The second part comprises of an address to the ferryman, much like that of PT 270, including an almost identical incipit "May you awake in peace!" (*rs=k m ḥtp*),<sup>42</sup> but differing from the spell by its expansion into an area of solar symbolism - here the King is to be introduced to Re and pass into the place of sunrise.<sup>43</sup> The third part has the sun-god use his authority to ensure the ferryman's service to the King, who is again said to be in pursuit of the Eye of Horus<sup>44</sup> - the two distinct modes of the King's transition in PT 270 are here interconnected by a common goal. The spell concludes by a statement of the King's purification by deities,<sup>45</sup> the identification of his body with both Horus and Seth and affirmation of his place in the solar bark.<sup>46</sup>

PT 478 begins again by an exhortation, this time to the god's ladder, which is to provide passage for Osiris to the company of the sun-god.<sup>47</sup> The same ladder is then attributed to the King, whom the god Horus identifies with himself in a speech to Geb<sup>48</sup> in which the King is also implicitly identified with Osiris as "the god of those who have gone to their *kas*" (i. e. the dead) (*ntr js n zj. w n k3. w-sn*).<sup>49</sup> In a following passage the King is also to ascend to the sky on the wing of Thoth as the Eye of Horus to great happiness of the gods, who are also discouraged from hindering the King by a threat of being denied ritual service.<sup>50</sup> The spell concludes with a statement of the King's physical integrity and consequent ascent to the sky.<sup>51</sup>

PT 515 is a medium-sized spell concerned mainly with ensuring the King's

39 §387a–c.

40 §594a.

41 §594b–596c.

42 §597a, cf. §384a.

43 §597c–598a.

44 §600a–c.

45 §601b–c.

46 §601d–602c.

47 §971a–e.

48 §973b.

49 §975c.

50 §977a–978e.

51 §980c.

nourishment and transportation in the afterlife. The two are significantly intertwined in the text as tools of travel – the wings of Thoth and Horus' barge-poles<sup>52</sup> – are to secure bread and beer for the King<sup>53</sup> and he himself journeys to the Marsh of Life (*sh.t ʿnh*) to partake of its freshening waters.<sup>54</sup> The text closes by claiming both meal and clothing for the King who is to arrive at a place of those provisioned for the afterlife.<sup>55</sup>

PT 531 is a very short spell remarkable only by its inclusion of Isis and Nephthys in the process of transition.<sup>56</sup> The goddesses are placed upon the wing to provide a means of transportation to the other side for the King who is "on an urgent mission of Horus", searching for the god's eye.<sup>57</sup>

PT 555, a spell of intermediate length, opens with an enumeration of the King's various ornaments and attributes of royal power.<sup>58</sup> An appeal to the four funerary goddesses Isis, Nephthys, Neith and Selket and also to Sekhat-Hor follows, exhorting them to provide aid to the beleaguered King.<sup>59</sup> Thoth is encouraged as to ferry the King from his place of adversity. The spell concludes with the assurance of the King's physical soundness and his ascent to the sky as a divine power.<sup>60</sup>

PT 566, a spell of only a few sentences, opens in an address to Horus and Thoth, asking the gods to include the King in their travel. Mobility of all the personages is affirmed and the King's possession of the Eye of Horus is proclaimed.<sup>61</sup>

In PT 615 the king is placed on the Wing, a ferryboat being made ready for him. His ownership of a boat is proclaimed. The phrase "wing of his brother Seth" (*ḏnh n sn=f stš*) is present instead of the usual "wing of Thoth" (*ḏnh ḏhw.tj*) and its variants. This spell is addressed separately in sub-chapter 1.7.

A mention of the wing of Thoth is present in the long, but fragmentary spell sPT 1064, recovered by MAFS in the pyramid of Pepi I. The opening is reminiscent of PT 478 with a greeting to the ladder of god. The ladder, belonging to Osiris, is to be given to the King, whom the gods are to aid in ascending it. The same deities are also expected to provide a ferryboat for the King and are discouraged from hindering his passage. The text concludes by once again confirming the King ascend and physical integrity.

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52 §1176a.

53 §1177a.

54 §1180a–c.

55 §1182a–d.

56 §1254a.

57 §1254b–d.

58 §1373a–1374c.

59 §1375a–1376c.

60 §1377a–1378c.

61 §1429a–e.



### 1.3 THE WING OF THOTH AND THE FERRYMAN SPELLS

In this sub-chapter the Wing texts will be classified in regard to the subgroups of transition spells - this classification will provide the basic idea of the Wing spells' context necessary for a closer appreciation of their meaning and the meaning of the motif itself.<sup>62</sup>

It would obviously be impractical to confront the Wing with all the 125 other transition motifs, which are listed by Hays, and such an approach is of course unnecessary. Even from the short summaries of the relevant spells a smaller and certainly more navigable area of study can be reached. The Wing is a means of travel and while its particular function will only become clear later, it can be safely assumed that its place is in that region of the PT system of ideas where literal movement is a concern. That is obvious from the instrumental use of the Wing in PT 359<sup>63</sup> or, in another manner, PT 515,<sup>64</sup> or in the alternative to a ferryboat it presents in PT 270<sup>65</sup>. The other spells treat it in a similar way. This very simple observation allows at least the general area in which to look for the Wing's function to be pinpointed, namely the area of the physical tools of transition, which make up only a fraction of the whole of transition motifs. Of these only two are present in the nine texts and have any kind of meaningful relationship with the Wing: the motif of travel by ferry and that of ascent on a ladder. It will be through comparison with these that the Wing spells' status will be evaluated.<sup>66</sup>

Eight out of the nine spells described in the previous chapter mention travel by ferry, indicating a significant relationship of the motif with the Wing of Thoth. This is even more apparent when the similarities between the Ferryman spells, i. e. those concerned with acquiring the right to travel on a celestial ferryboat for the King, and the spells we have referred to so far as Wing spells are pointed out. While there is no typical ferryman spell with which the Wing spells could be compared, there is a number of elements more or less essential to these spells that can be found in Wing spells in positions of comparatively

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62 On the ferryman motif in the Pyramid Texts with particular regard to the spatial aspect of the Hereafter, see Harco Willems, "The Social and Ritual Context of a Mortuary Liturgy", in Harco Willems (ed.), *Social Aspects of Funerary Culture in the Egyptian Old and Middle Kingdoms: Proceedings of the International Symposium Held at Leiden University 6–7 June, 1996*, Leuven: Peeters, p. 264–266. For a short description of the Old Kingdom funerary rites, including the naval rituals often connected to the Ferryman spells, see John A. Wilson, "Funerary Services of the Old Kingdom", *JNES* 3 (1944): 201–218. For a more interpretative approach, see Harco Willems, *The Coffin of Heqata*, p. 156–177. While the text is mainly concerned with the Coffin Texts spell 398, a Middle Kingdom ferryman spell, a number of references is made to the ferryman spells of the Pyramid Texts and the findings of work are often applicable to the Old Kingdom material as well.

63 §594c–596a.

64 §1176a.

65 §387ac.

66 For the relationship of the Wing motif with the Ferryman motif, see H. Röder, "Auf den Flügeln des Thot", p. 249.

similar meaning. An opening by an address to the ferryman, so prominent in PT 270 and PT 359 is quite common in ferryman spells, being present in PT 474, PT 506, PT 518, PT 613 or PT 616, which is notable by being composed solely of the speech to the ferryman, emphasizing the motif's importance. The imperiled status of the King, presented in in PT 566 as being marooned or in the state of being boatless of PT 615, can be found in PT 613, where too the King is found stranded on a riverbank. A threat against the celestial ferryman in PT 270 can also be seen in PT 520 and PT 613, as is that against a deity of PT 310, found in a Wing-spell PT 478.

This list could be extended further, but the important fact should be quite clear. No distinction on the basis of form or topic can be made between the Ferryman spells and those containing the Wing of Thoth motif, apart from the obvious fact of the phrase's presence in the latter. There is thus no reason to think of the Wing spells as constituting a category that can be understood as a relatively autonomous whole and we should rather approach them with regard to the overwhelming presence of Ferryman spells' elements in them.

It could be said that the Wing spells simply present a subcategory of Ferryman spells, but this claim encounters two issues. The first is an obvious one: the Wing motif is present in one spell where there is essentially Ferryman imagery, PT 478, and in another one, sPT 1064, where it is of scarce importance when compared to the dominance Ladder of God motif there. The case of PT 478, which is the only spell containing the Wing phrase without any reference to travel by boat, is very specific, as the Wing plays no significant role there, clearly being secondary to the Ladder motif. The second stems from the fact that there is no reason, apart from the presence of the Wing motif itself, to classify the spells as distinct from the rest of the category.

Rather than trying to provide a unifying principle of the nine spells, considering them as a separate group, distinguished by either structure or content, they should be viewed first and foremost as transition spells. The motif is to be approached as an element within this whole category – if we consider it as an element of the Ferryman spells, which is not, however, completely restricted to them, we will search for the motif's meaning in a sensible context. In this way its meaning will present itself both through its function in the spells containing it and the inner workings of those spells that make do without it.

#### 1.4 RELATION TO OTHER TRANSITION MOTIFS

At a superficial level, the meaning of the Wing of Thoth is apparent. It is a symbol of transition, determined by its role in facilitating the King's journey to renewed life. The after-world, or at least a certain part of it, was envisioned as a passage of sorts.<sup>67</sup> There was a space that was to be traversed by the King, who in doing so became an elevated being, equipped with all the necessities and privileges of royal life: beginning in a place of hunger and privation, he arrives to a land of rest where there is no need. This passage was also to some degree problematic, as places of transition, being liminal in the strictest sense, inevitably are. In this ideal environment with prospects of both elevation and harm, ideal

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67 J. Assmann, "Death and Initiation in the Funerary Religion of Ancient Egypt", p. 137.

tools for ensuring the King's passage were provided,<sup>68</sup> just as personalized malefactors were to actualize the otherwise vague threat inherent to the liminal stage of death.<sup>69</sup>

The individual spells of transition approach this general idea in a variety of often conflicting ways and the spells containing the Wing phrases are no exception. While there is significant repetition of themes throughout the corpus of transition spells, the Wing appears in a multitude of particular contexts, which necessitates a specific approach in explaining its exact role in these spells beyond the simple designation "transition motif". The function and thus the meaning of the Wing motif in its individual attestations results from the interplay with other constituent elements of the spells and their sequences, most notably from the interaction with other transition motifs. As it is obvious even from the very concise summaries of the spells in question, the Wing texts do not constitute a specific sub-category, where the motif of the Wing would solely fill the niche of a transition motif and differentiate them in that way from other transition texts. There are significant overlaps between the Wing-spells and other transition spells, most importantly transition motifs present in these spells are present in the Wing-spells as well, creating a more complex framework, a composite motif of sorts, which constitutes the transition element of these spells. By realizing the role of the Wing vis-à-vis other transition motifs, its essential characteristics should emerge, clarifying its meaning.

One layer of meaning of the Wing is obvious from the narrative of PT 270. It would be norm for the King to acquire the services of the ferryman of the sky and indeed the greater part of the spell concerns itself with this wish. It is only at the end of the spell when the possibility of this plan's failure is mentioned that another, clearly secondary option is made available to the King:

"NN has come to you that you may transport him in the ferryboat in which you transport the gods. ( ... ) So should you not transport NN, he will jump up and put himself on a wing of Thoth, and he is the one who will transport NN to yonder side.<sup>70</sup><sup>71</sup>

Should this Ferryman of the sky deny him the right of passage, travel on the Wing of Thoth provides a accessible alternative for the King who would otherwise remain marooned on the wrong side of the Winding Waterway (*mr-n-ḥ3*),<sup>72</sup> a fear articulated in a

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68 Winfried Barta, *Die Bedeutung der Pyramidentexte für den Verstorbenen König*, Berlin – München: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 1981, p. 82.

69 For death in Egypt as a liminal stage and the funerary rite as a rite of passage, see H. Willems, *Coffin of Heqata*, p. 380–381.

70 Pepi's version has "of the horizon" added.

71 §384a–b, 387a–c: *j.n NN ḥr=k d3=k sw (m) mḥn.t tw d33.t=k ntr.w jm=s ( ... ) j.tm=k d3 NN stp=f d=f sw tp.j dnh n dhw.tj swt d33=f NN jr gs pf.*

72 A canal in the sky, identifiable with both the genitals of the Nut, the sky-goddess of rebirth, and the primordial ocean, the source of all life. See Harco Willems, *The Coffin*

number of ferryman spells.<sup>73</sup> While none of the remaining spells makes itself so clear as to the relationship between the Wing and other transition motifs, the principle of interchangeability and optionality of the Wing of Thoth can be found in the corpus and PT 270 serves as a good point of reference for these instances.

PT 359 is probably the only complex spell in which the Wing plays a significant role as the first third of this relatively sizeable spell is dominated by the imagery of divine entities crossing the Winding Canal on the Wing of Thoth. It might seem that the symbol of the Wing might be indispensable in a situation like this, where the very fabric of the narrative hold together around it. In PT 475, however, we find an image of an essentially identical, if slightly abbreviated, form, but without any sign of Thoth:

"You, ferryman! Get that (ferryboat) for Horus: get his eye. Get that for Seth: get his testicles. Horus's eye has jumped up and made landfall in the eastern side of the sky: this Pepi will jump up with it and this Pepi will proceed in the eastern side of the sky. He will go and escort the Sun in the place of the gods who have [gone] to their kas, who live in Horus's mounds, who live in Seth's mounds. Look, this Pepi has come. Look, this Pepi has come forth. This Pepi has run the sky's height and this Pepi cannot be barred from the Beaten Path of Stars by the great ones of the White Palace. The Dayboat shall call for this Pepi: Pepi is the one who bails it. The Sun shall place this Pepi as lord of life and authority forever."<sup>74</sup>

Both the structure and the wording of this spell resonates strongly with PT 359. The two spells' beginnings speak of the mutilation of Horus and Seth.<sup>75</sup> A description of the Eye's crossing follows, as does the King's pursuit of the Eye.<sup>76</sup> The address to the divine ferryman is not present independently in a complex form present in PT 359 and PT 270, but it is not entirely absent, as the section referring to the conflict of Horus and Seth took on a form of speech to the ferryman.<sup>77</sup> The King is then to join the Sun in a journey to the place of the gods who have gone to their *kas* by the Mounds of Seth and Mounds of Horus. An assurance of the King's right to the solar bark is also provided<sup>78</sup> and while the process of

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*of Heqata: (Cairo JdE 36418): A Case Study of Egyptian Funerary Culture of the early Middle Kingdom*, Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters en Departement Oriëntalistiek, 1996, p. 371.

73 §1028c; §1030b; §1176b; §1429e; §1742c–d; §2090d.

74 §946a–950b: *jj mhn.t pw jn nw n hrw jn jr.t=f jn nw n stš jn hr.wj=f stp jr.t hrw hr m gs jzb.t n p.t stp NN pn hn<sup>c</sup>=s sdz NN pn m gs jzb.t n p.t šm=f stp=f z3 jr r<sup>c</sup> m js.t ntr.w zj.w n k3.w=sn n<sup>h</sup>.w m j3.wt hr.w n<sup>h</sup>.w m j3.wt stš m-k NN pn jj.j m-k NN pn pr n n<sup>h</sup> w3s ph.n k3.w p.t nj hsf NN pn jn wr.w-<sup>c</sup>h-<sup>h</sup>d jr msk.t shd.w njs m<sup>c</sup>nd.t NN sw.t pnk s d r<sup>c</sup> NN pn m nb n<sup>h</sup> w3s d.t.*

75 §594, §946b–c.

76 §594, §947a–b.

77 §594a–c.

78 §949c–950a.

purification is not to be found in PT 475 itself, one can easily locate a corresponding section in the opening of PT 476, the next spell in the subsequence,<sup>79</sup> where "every god between them (i.e. the sky and the earth) will cleanse Pepi".<sup>80</sup>

The spells are remarkably similar and are clearly variations on the same topic, being strongly reminiscent of each other in both the content and structure of the spells. The absence of the Wing motif is thus quite informative, as it is the only prominent element of PT 359 omitted in PT 475. This cross-examination of PT 359 and PT 475/6 shows that the Wing motif functions here in the same way as in PT 270, although on a more general level: it is again an optional element, available to replace or complement the more conventional ferryman motif.

This inter-textual relationship between PT 359 and PT 475/6 indicates that the role of the Wing motif in PT 270 is but an aspect of its function. The Wing is a secondary transition motif, capable of complementing or replacing a primary transition motif, this in most cases being one of those surrounding the core idea of a celestial ferry. Consequently, the god is often approached very instrumentally, becoming even less personal than is usual for the deities of the Pyramid Texts.<sup>81</sup> This objectification is quite plainly stated in PT 515 and PT 531. In the first the god is only mentioned once at the spell's beginning:

"Horus's sounding-poles, Thoth's wings, ferry this Pepi; don't maroon him. May you give bread to this Pepi, may you give beer to this Pepi, from your bread of eternity (*d.t*), from you beer of continuity (*nḥḥ*)."<sup>82</sup>

The juxtaposition of the phrase *dnḥ.wj dhw.tj* ("the two wings of Thoth") with *sm<sup>c</sup>.wj hr.w*, "the two sounding-poles of Horus" indicates that the Wings are considered akin to the sounding-poles, which are items in the strictest sense – it would be hard to argue that they were considered to be body-parts of Horus. Thoth here serves as a simple tool. While there is agency attributed to him, should we read the *dj-k t* and *dj-k ḥnk.t* with Thoth's wings and Horus' sounding-poles as subjects, the Wings are in this spell personified objects at best.

A similar situation is the case in PT 531. There the "two kites" – Isis and Nephthys<sup>83</sup> – are combined with the Wing in its transitional capacity:

"You two kites atop Thoth's wing, you two who are on the crown, you two

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79 Subsequence 160, sequence 104; See H. M. Hays, *The Organization of the Pyramid Texts*, p. 395–396.

80 §951b: *nṯr nb n.tj jm.jwt=sn s<sup>c</sup>b=f NN*.

81 For the impersonal character of Egyptian gods in general, see Henri Frankfort, *Ancient Egyptian Religion: An Interpretation*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1948, p. 3–29.

82 §1176a–1177b.

83 For the two kites representing the mourning goddesses Isis and Nephthys, see J. A. Wilson, "Funerary Services of the Old Kingdom", p. 204.

furious ones,<sup>84</sup> fetch that (ferryboat) for this Pepi, put him on yonder side. This Pepi is on an urgent mission for Horus."<sup>85</sup>

The core idea of the spell is again the King's passage across an otherworldly riverway – the King is on a quest and he needs the services of divine beings. Untypically, the sisters Isis and Nephthys are required to do the „fetching“, an act associated usually with Thoth or, even more often, with the ferryman of the sky. While in PT 270 or PT 359 the Wing is the direct agent of passage, in PT 531 it empowers other deities to act in this capacity. The Wing becomes an emblem or tool with which the goddesses, who are normally associated with more explicitly funerary act in the Pyramid texts, are made available for the King in need of transition. The particular reason for the choice of the goddesses is not of importance for the inquiry into the Wing's meaning: it is possible that there was a need for a spell in which an overlap between the motifs of transition and the funerary sphere, it may also be argued that the goddesses were chosen because of the avian nature they were sometimes attributed. Indeed, the spell addresses them as *dr.wt*, meaning both „mourners“ and „kites“, instead of using their proper names.<sup>86</sup> The important point is that the Wing again acts in an auxiliary capacity, supporting more dominant elements in

84 The reading the phrase is problematic due to the variations in the original hieroglyphic. The version of Merenre reads *dndn.w*, a singular, while that of Pepi II has *dndnw.tj*, most likely a dual feminine participle. The version of Pepi I is severely damaged and only *dnd* can be read with certainty. None of the variants has a determinative. Although Allen presents the version of Pepi I as the primary one (James P. Allen, James P. Peter Der Manuelian (ed.), *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005, p. 164), his translation seems to consider the version of Merenre as such, rendering the passage as "you two kites on the crown of Wanderer's head", clearly relating the *dndn.w* to the verb *dndn* ("to traverse"; *Wb* 5, 470.12–13), interpreting the title simply as "Epithet of the Sun." (J. P. Allen, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, , p. 443). His translation coincides with the older translation of the Wörterbuch (*Wb* 5, 470.14–15) and of Sethe's commentary (Kurt Sethe, *Übersetzung und Kommentar zu den altägyptischen Pyramidentexten*, Glückstadt: Augustin, 1935, p. 156). Due to the lack of a determinative it is also possible that the word in question is related to the verb *dndn* ("to be angry, to rage"; *Wb* 5, 471.21–472.5), an idea presented by *Lexikon der ägyptischen Götter und Götterbezeichnungen* (VII, p. 552), which translates the term as "die beiden Wütenden". The version of Pepi II is obviously considered the full one for §1254b, the transliteration cited in the *Lexikon* being *dndn.tj*. The *dndn.w* of Merenre is treated as a variant of that of Pepi II (VII, p. 554). As it is more likely that the two signs representing *.tj* were omitted in the version of Merenre rather than arbitrarily added to that of Pepi II, it seems better to translate the word as a dual feminine participle, as does the *Lexikon*, which convincingly treats the title *dndn* "der Wütende" distinct from the *dndn.tj* found in PT.

85 §1254a–d: *dr.tj jpt.wt tp.j dnh dhw.tj whnn.wtj dndn.wtj jn nw n NN pn d.jj sw m pf gs jw NN pn n nh m jp.t hrw hzmm*.

86 W. M. Davis, "The Ascension-Myth in the Pyramid Texts", p. 176. It is also possible that the spell refers to the practice of two mourners accompanying the body on the funerary boat as Isis and Nephthys. See H. Willems, *Coffin of Heqata*, p. 115.

the spell.

PT 555 again puts Thoth in conjunction with funerary goddesses, here in their full entourage of Isis, Nephthys, Neith and Selket, along with Sekhat-Hor:

"Mother of Pepi, Isis! His Nurse, Nephthys!! You who suckled him, She Who Remembers Horus! Neith, behind him! Selket, before him! Tie the lashings, land his ferryboats, [for a son of Atum] who is hungry and thirsty, thirsty and hungry, on the southern side of the Winding Canal. Thoth in the limit of your bush's shade, put Pepi on your wingtip in yonder northern side of the Winding Canal."<sup>87</sup>

The role of the Wing is more autonomous compared to the previous spell, but it still does not achieve the total responsibility for the King's passage.<sup>88</sup> The action of Thoth is preceded by that of the five goddesses, who are exhorted to prepare a ship ("tie the lashings, untie the ferryboats")<sup>89</sup> for the King. The relation of this section to the Wing of Thoth one it is followed by is again uncertain – it is possible to read the tying and landing as either prerequisites to the putting of Thoth or alternatives. The spell itself presents no answer. The symbolic aspect of the King's being surrounded by Isis, Nephthys, Neith and Selket, who represent the four sides of the coffin, is quite clear, the surrounding goddesses giving him total protection and guaranteeing his rejuvenation.<sup>90</sup> In either case the Wing is a dependent agent, relying on others to allow its function. As it was seen above, this is typical of the Wing, which is considered as a secondary symbol.

In PT 566 we come probably the closest to an image of autonomous agency by Thoth in his capacity of divine ferryman. In the very short spell the god is asked to transport the

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87 §1375a–1377c: *mjw.t n.t NN js.t mn<sup>c</sup>t=f nb.t-ḥw.t snḳ.t NN šḳ.t-ḥrw n.t m ḥ.t=f srḳ.t tp.j*  
*ḥ.wj=f tḳz.jj ḥ.w zmḳ.jj mḥnw.wt=f n zḳ n tm ḥḳr jbj.j jbj.j ḥḳr m pn gs rsw n mr-n-ḥḳ dḥw.tj*  
*jm.j dr šw bḳ.t=f dj NN tp.j ḥnd dnh=k m pf gs mḥt n mr-n-ḥḳ.*

88 The section is ambiguous in the original. It is unclear if we are to understand the *dj NN tp.j ḥnd dnh=k m pf gs* as „put him on your wingtip onto (*m* of direction) the other side“, rather than „put him on your wingtip on (*m* of location) the other side, as the latter would have the placing on the Wing happen after the crossing of the Winding Waterway, as opposed to the former, more usual reading which locates the god's original station on the „wrong side“ of the Waterway. It seems more sensible to read this section in the light of the other Wing spells, which by the use of the verb *dḳ* evoke a more precise idea of the journey and allow us to place Thoth unambiguously on the first bank to which the King arrives. It might nevertheless be prudent to keep the ambivalence of the phrase at §1377b-c in mind.

89 1376a: *tḳz.jj ḥ.w zm<sup>c</sup>.jj mḥn.wt=f.*

90 For Isis, Nephthys, Neith and Selket as the four goddesses of solar renewal and Osirian resurrection, see Ali Radwan, “Darstellung der Aufgehende Sonne auf einigen Stelen der Ramessidenzeit”, in *Studien zu Sprache und Religion Ägyptens II*, Göttingen, 1984, p. 826. See also Richard H. Wilkinson, *The Complete Valley of the Kings: Tombs and Treasures of Egypt's Greatest Pharaohs*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1997, p. 154.

King in a perturbingly concrete manner: „Ferry him, Thoth, on your wingtip as Sokar at the fore of the Maat-boat.“<sup>91</sup> The phrase *skr js* ("as Sokar, being Sokar") should most likely be read as referring to Thoth, not the King. The spell wishes the god to modify his capacity of transportation to reflect that of Sokar, a Memphite hawk-god, ruler of the necropolis, who participated in the royal rebirth as a warden of a desert expanse of the world of the dead described in the Amduat. The Maat-boat is of course the solar bark, ferrying on which was a desire often expresses by the Pyramid Texts, the King wishing to partake of the Sun's journey towards daily resurrection.

Thoth here is not subordinated to any divine being, save for the King himself. Unlike the spells described above, PT 566 has the wing of Thoth as the only means of transition. Even here, however, the wing is not left to provide the transport on its own terms. A change in identity is asked of Thoth, who is supposed to take on the mantle of Sokar, taking upon himself a very specific image of transportation: Sokar is often connected to an idea of dragging a boat across a desert.<sup>92</sup> Here, as before, a particular mode of transition is brought in to complement the wing. Furthermore, Thoth is again joined by Horus, who is ferry the King as well, reducing the total responsibility of Thoth as well.

### 1.5 THE WING OF THOTH AND THE LADDER OF THE SKY

We have seen that in the majority of cases the Wing motif appears in a position of secondary value, generally being subordinate to other, more dominant elements of the ferryman spells. Provisionally it might be stated that the Wing is an auxiliary motif, supporting, complementing or contrasting with other members of the transition spell even to the degree of attributing power of transition to entities otherwise not used in such capacity.<sup>93</sup>

This is the case for the majority of the Wing spells, which have been identified as proper of the Ferryman spells. Of course, as has been shown in the Summary sub-chapter, two of the spells – PT 478 and sPT 1064 – are not primarily concerned with an idea of a celestial water-journey, the Ferryman being completely absent from PT 478 and being only indirectly referred to in sPT 1064 by the verb *d3* ("ferry").

PT 478 is relatively similar in structure to the ferryman texts: it opens with an address, this time to the ladder of god, a device erected to secure royal elevation to the sky. Horus is said to be in following of Osiris and the King, identified with the Eye of Horus, is to ascend to the sky – anyone barring him will be denied worship. The spell closes with an assurance of the King's security and bodily integrity.

We find the Wing of Thoth in at the beginning of a section identifying the Eye of Horus with the King, whose ascent to the sky is thus guaranteed. The sentence containing the phrase goes as follows: *nbd̄bd̄ jr.t hr.w tp.j dn̄ḥ d̄ḥw.tj m gs j3b.j n m3k̄.t ntr*. The obvious

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91 §1429b–c: *d3=k d̄ḥw.tj m tp ʿnd=k zkr js hn̄.t m3̄ʿ.t*.

92 §445a–d.

93 §1254a–d.



complication to any interpretation of this sentence stems from the verb *nbdbd*, a *hapax* on whose translation there is little agreement among the scholars. While Allen renders the phrase *nbdbd jr.t hr.w tp.j dnḥ dḥw.tj* as "Horus' eye has *bounced* atop Thoth's wing",<sup>94</sup> Faulkner tentatively reads *nbdbd* as "gleam"<sup>95</sup>, while TLA, accepting Faulkner's translation, has "Das Horusauge hüpf(?) auf den Flügel des Thot". Given that these translations are essentially conjectures and that the context does not provide any particularly helpful hints as to the word's meaning, it is impossible to properly evaluate the specifics of the Wing's use outside ferryman spells based on PT 478. It is obvious that a transition takes place in the motif's immediate context here. The Eye of Horus does *nbdbd* on the eastern side of the sky, which might entail an initial position, as does the eastern (or southern) side of the celestial waterway in other spells. The King is then identified with the Eye and thanks to this gains the love of the gods and goes to the sky on the ladder of god. It could be assumed that as in PT 359 a close relationship between the King and the Eye is established through the Wing here, but again it can be observed that the spell will yield nothing apart from that already found elsewhere, unless a more comprehensive understanding of the verb is achieved.

Moving to the other Ladder spell in question, another difficulty presents. Like so many of Pepi I. spells uncovered by MAFS, sPT 1064 is riddled with lacunae, preventing a complete translation. The Wing is contained in a phrase *jr.t hr.w tp.j dnḥ dḥw.tj NN*, flanked by relatively long patches of damaged text. While Allen's reconstruction of the section allows us to make some assumptions about the text's meaning,<sup>96</sup> the lack of a predicate prevents any understanding of the Wing's role here from being derived from anything else than comparison with other spells.

As a whole sPT 1064 is structurally similar to PT 478, opening with an address to the ladder of god, which is followed by a statement of a following of Osiris by King as Horus. The gods are then to accept the King and allow his transition by ladder (PT 478) or by both ladder and ferryboat, if that reading of sPT 1064 is accurate. Naysayers among the gods are threatened and the King's physical soundness is proclaimed.

In conclusion, little about the Wing of Thoth can be learned from the Ladder spells. This is in part caused by the issues of preservation and translation. Despite these, however, it can be seen that the position of the Wing motif in the texts is even less prominent than in the ferryman spells, as only two attestations of the phrase are present in the two spells. There is thus little reason to believe that some vital insights into the matter are obscured by the poor understanding of PT 478 and sPT 1064 and certainly none that would contest the claims of previous sub-chapters.

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94 J. P. Allen, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, p. 280.

95 R. O. Faulkner, *Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, p. 166.

96 "[You gods who put] Horus's eye atop Thoth's wing, Pepi [ ... ] him in the yonder eastern side of the sky. Ferry that (ferryboat) to him, take him [with you.]"

## 1.6 THE WING AS AN AUXILIARY SYMBOL

It has been found that throughout the spells in which it is present - with the exception of those that are not entirely comprehensible for one reason or another - the Wing of Thoth operates in a consistent manner. It is a transition motif and has a power of its own, but it never stands alone, it never is the sole benefactor of a beleaguered King, left stranded on the wrong side of the world beyond. Unlike the ferryman of the sky or the ladder of god, the Wing of Thoth does not seem to be capable of independent action, always complementing others or mediating its power to them.

Like all the other tools of transition, the Wing is a mediating agent. The wing, the ladder, the ferry and the many more - all of these serve the beneficiary by allowing him to pass from a state of danger to one of blessedness and security. Some spells emphasize the undesirability of the initial position, calling the King "marooned".<sup>97</sup> Other speak of the powers that would deny him the right of passage to thereafter, threatening these "gods and *akhs* who would bar him"<sup>98</sup> with cessation of worship. All, however, point out to the central fact that a journey has to be made: the beneficiary is in a state of death and must reach new life. This process is complicated and the King needs help - just as there is no way from one river bank to the other requires a boat, so does the transition from one state to another necessitate a mediator.

The Wing is far from being the most frequent of these mediators in the numerous transition spells, but in a sense conforms the most to the idea of transition. The Wing has no symbolic world of its own, like the ferryman's with his boat and the Winding Canal, or that of the Ladder to the sky, held straight by Horus and Seth, their powers united in service of the royal person. Thoth is here a purer agent of transition, available anywhere he is needed: when doubts came about the ferryman's willingness, be it out of fear for his malice or the riddles so frequent in the Coffin Text, but alluded to in PT as well, Thoth was called upon to provide an alternative. In other cases the Wing could reinforce a transition motif and as it has been shown in PT 566, it could even give a mediating quality to deities not usually possessing it.

It is known that Egyptians were adverse to pure abstracts, preferring to express themselves in a symbolic language of living things and natural phenomena. Compared to an image of a boat on a canal somewhere in the sky, Thoth might have seemed as too indefinite, a power too general for the purposes of the spells. Still, however, the potency of the deity was retained and used to reinforce the more particular transition concepts.<sup>99</sup> In this way the Wing of Thoth worked as a more abstract source of transitional symbolism, too generalized to be a casual source of mediation, but also more readily applied to a wide variety of contexts. In comparison with the ferry and the ladder, the Wing of Thoth was too much about mediation to be used as a mediator.

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97 §1028c; §1030b; §1176b; §1429e; §1742c-d; §2090d.

98 §978a-e.

99 Cf. Martin Stadler, *Weiser und Wesir: Studien zu Vorkommen, Rolle und Wesen des Gottes Thoth im ägyptischen Totenbuch*, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009, p. 357.

Two more spells related to the problem of the Wing will be evaluated. While neither of the spells sheds any further light on the subject, their particular differences from the texts mentioned above might prove informative of the nature of the Wing in Thoth himself.

### 1.7 THE WING OF SETH

One of the more anomalous traits of Thoth in the Pyramid Texts, as opposed to later tradition, is his close affinity to the chaos-god Seth.<sup>100</sup> One instance of this is PT 615, where the phrase "wing of Seth" is found:

"Put Horus's eye on the wing of his brother Seth! Tie the lashings, untie the ferryboats, for a son of Atum! Atum's son is not marooned. Now, the King is Atum's son, and Atum's son is not marooned."<sup>101</sup>

It is obvious at first sight that this is a proper transition spell, a one of the variety that tends to carry the Wing motif. The sentences "Tie the lashings! Untie the ferryboats!"<sup>102</sup> are in an identical form present in PT 555<sup>103</sup> and the motif of marooning is prominent in a number of the spells in question. As in PT 555, the Wing is envisioned as a complement to the ferryboat or as a ferry itself.<sup>104</sup> The presence of Seth in place of Thoth is, however, is quite perplexing, and not only because Seth is not usually rendered as a winged deity. The situation is unlikely to have been caused by scribal error, as the spellings used for Seth and Thoth in the Pyramid Texts are significantly dissimilar. It is clear that Thoth has been replaced by Seth in PT 615 while the spell itself retained its structure and its function of a transition spell. If it weren't for the word "Seth", PT 615 would be a typical Wing spell.

While the close relationship of Seth and Thoth will be treated more extensively in the chapters devoted to the sacerdotal texts, a few preliminary remarks might shed some light on this substitution of Thoth. It will be shown that some of the spells treat Thoth as an aspect or an emanation of Seth that shares his role of chaos-god until a certain point where it becomes a distinct entity devoted to the prosecution of Seth and the forces of disorder. The initial identity of Seth and Thoth is what grants Thoth with the power to

100 An early study of the phenomenon is presented in Eberhard Otto, "Thot als Stellvertreter des Seth", *Orientalia* 7 (1938): 69–79. For the relationship between the two gods in general, see Henk Te Velde, *Seth: God of Confusion*, Leiden: Brill, 1967, ix + 168 p. See also M. Stadler, *Weiser und Wesir*, p. 147–151.

101 §1742a–d: *m.jj hrw hr dnh n sn=f stš t3z.jj 'h.w zm3.jj mhnw.wt n z3 tm nj z3 tm jwj.j NN pw jr z3 tm z3 tm nj jwj.j.*

102 §1742b: *t3z.jj 'h.w zm3.jj mhn.wt=f.*

103 §1376a: *t3z.jj 'h.w zm3.jj mhn.wt=f.*

104 Griffiths admits that nowhere in the Pyramid Texts does Seth appear as a winged deity, but he does not relate the two gods in the context of PT 615. Instead he points out to the infrequent image of winged Seth spearing Apophis (John Gwyn Griffiths, *The Conflict of Horus and Seth According to Egyptian and Classical Sources*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1960, p. 3).

oppose chaos and is a relatively prominent motif in the Pyramid Texts. The case of PT 615 seems to stem from this particular identification, exploring it from the other side: just as in the sacerdotal spells Thoth takes on the attributes of Seth, so does here Seth take on the mediator function of Thoth.

### 1.8 THE WING IN PT 524

All the attestations of the Wing of Thoth phrase in its various forms have been discussed in the previous sub-chapters, there is one more spell that has to be mentioned before the topic can be closed. In PT 524, a transition spell concerned mainly with the relationship between the King, the Eye of Horus and Thoth, we find a passage where the body-parts of the King are equated with those of non-human beings:

"The face of this Pepi is that of a jackal, this Pepi's arms are those of a falcon, this Pepi's wings-tips are those of Thoth. Geb shall fly this Pepi to the sky, so that this Pepi may take Horus's eye to him."<sup>105</sup>

The terms *z3b* and *b(j)k* may refer to a literal jackal or falcon or to the gods Wepwawet and Horus, the lack of divine classifier tell us little, as it is very often omitted in the Pyramid Texts. The name of Thoth stands in contrast with this, who could just as well be supplanted by the ibis (*thn*) and seems to indicate a distinction between Thoth and the falcon and jackal. These points will be addressed later. What is important now is that the Wing of Thoth was a symbol of potency even when removed from the very narrow context in which it was found above. Like the powerful limbs of the falcon or the vigilant face of the jackal, the Wing of Thoth held a quality that the deceased desired for himself. While the texts tell us nothing about the precise nature of this quality, it may be inferred from the following sentence that it is connected to the idea of the King's ascent to the sky. Here as before the Wing supports another element of the spell in the context of transition.

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105 §1235a–d: *ḥr n NN pn m z3b ʕ.wj NN pn m bjk tp.t dnḥ.w NN pn m dhw.tj j.sp3 gbb NN pn jr p.t šd NN pn jr.t ḥrw n=f.*

## 2. THOTH THE MOON

### 2.1 GENERAL REMARKS

Since the Old Kingdom the religion of ancient Egypt was dominated by the figure of the sun-god, a life-giving ruler and creator of the universe, which was in itself an extension of the supreme god's being. The Moon, while considered to be a "nighttime Sun",<sup>106</sup> has never reached such prominence and only a few deities of importance were related to the lunar sphere at a given time. Remarkably enough, Thoth is the only lunar god that found its way into the Pyramid Texts with Khonsu taking on a savage role as a god who slits throats and tears innards out.<sup>107</sup> This chapter will present the spells presenting Thoth in his role of a lunar deity.<sup>108</sup>

Two texts of the personal category refer to Thoth in his lunar capacity: PT 210 and PT 406, with a possible reference in PT 262. Neither of these spells explicitly identify Thoth with the Moon. In PT 210, the King's sustenance in the afterlife is made dependent on the food and beverages of Re and Thoth, like whom he is supposed to circle the sky:

"Sun and Thoth, take the King with you, that he may eat of what you eat of, that he may drink of what you drink, that he may live on what you live on ( ... ) Unis will circumnavigate the sky like the Sun, Unis shall course the sky like Thoth."<sup>109</sup>

While an explicit reference is nowhere to be found in this spell, Thoth is here present as a celestial body that traverses the sky like the Sun does. He is also referred in this way in PT 210 in a passage where the King rejects faeces and urine as forms of sustenance, "like Seth rejects the two *mtrḥ*<sup>110</sup> that cross the sky".<sup>111</sup> While the term *mtrḥ* itself is of uncertain meaning, the context makes it clear that the two objects traversing the sky

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106 Samuel A. B. Mercer, *Horus: Royal God of Egypt*, Grafton (Mass.): Society of Oriental Research, 1942, p. 79. Cf. §521a–b, §709a.

107 §402a-b: *jn ḥnz.w mds nb.w ḏḏd=f sn n NN ḏd=f n=f jm.t ḥ.t=sn*. Cf. Erik Hornung, *Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt: The One and the Many*, tr. by John Baines, Henley – London – Melbourne: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982, p. 68. (Ger. original *Der Eine und die Vielen: Ägyptische Gottesvorstellungen*, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1971.)

108 For a summary of Thoth's lunar role in Egyptian religion, see M. Stadler, *Weiser und Wesir*, p. 200–218.

109 §128c–130d: *rꜥ pw ḥnꜥ ḏḥw.tj ḏd.tn NN ḥnꜥ.tn wnm=f m wnm.t=tn jm zwr=f m zwr.t=tn jm* ( ... ) *dbn NN pt mr rꜥ ḥnz NN pt mr ḏḥw.tj*.

110 An unknown object of wood.

111 For a more detailed analysis of PT 210 with particular regard to the concept of abomination, see Paul John Frandsen, "Bwt in the body", in Harco Willems (ed.), *Social Aspects of Funerary Culture in the Egyptian Old and Middle Kingdoms*, Leuven – Paris – Sterling: Uitgeverij Peeters, 2001, p. 145–165.

are the Sun and the Moon, represented by Re and Thoth.

The situation is even less explicit in PT 406. The spell is an address to the sun-god, who is to secure provision for the King, notably milk of Isis and "abundance" of Nephthys<sup>112</sup>. The closing section of the PT 406 goes as follows:

"Let the King see you when you emerge as Thoth, when a beaching place is made for the Sun's boat at its marshes in the bald sky, when you close up as the one at the fore of his Infinities."<sup>113</sup>

This meaning of this passage is not obvious at first. It is clear, that the Sun does under certain conditions emerge (*pr*) as Thoth (*m dhw.tj*). As the following sentence seems to say, this happens when the barge of the Sun beaches in a region named Iasu, which it is possible to translate through *j3s* („to be bald“) as Bald-place or Bald-sky, taking into account the sky determinative in Teti's version. Allen interprets this „baldness“ as referring to the nocturnal horizon, where there are no stars visible. The other sentence too seems to refer to the horizon, as the Sun is said to „close up“ (*gw3*) at the front of the *hh.w*, the gods supporting the sky at the margins of the earth.

The manifestation of the Sun as Thoth begins with the termination of the Sun's journey at the horizon, where it closes up.<sup>114</sup> It thus seems that Thoth here represents a nightly form of the Sun, which we know from later texts to be the Moon, despite its occasional visibility during daytime.

Identifying Thoth as the Moon allows an evaluation of one of his epithets that is found in PT 262. The spell opens in a series of addresses to various deities who are called „not to be ignorant of NN“, each of these speeches closing with a special name of the god by which he is called by the king. Thoth is named *htp w*, which can be translated as „he who is at peace alone“. Reading this literally, this might mean that Thoth rests when everyone else is *not resting*, i. e. during the day. PT 262 may in this way refer to Thoth's lunar aspect, although it is clear that this interpretation is far from definite.

## 2.2 THE MOON IN OTHER PYRAMID TEXTS

The three possible attestation of Thoth's association with the Moon form only a fraction of the references to the lunar in the Pyramid Texts. As the previous sub-chapter yielded little understanding of what exactly does it mean for Thoth to be viewed as the lunar disc, a comparison with other instances of lunar symbolism should be made to provide a contrastive background to the three texts mentioned above.

The majority of references to the lunar is comprised of assurances to the King of his

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112 §707a: *jn n-k jr.t js.t n NN 3gb.j nb,t-hw.t. 3gb.j* can also be read as "flood".

113 §709a–d: *m3 tw NN pr-k r-k m dhw.tj jr.t ms3 n wj3 r jr sh.wt=f jm.t j<sup>c</sup>sw gw3=k m hn.t hh.w=f.*

114 J. G. Griffiths, "Remarks on the mythology of the eyes of Horus", *CdE* 33 (1958): 183–185.

participation in various moon festivals of the Egyptian lunar cycle. Most often the festival of the new-moon day is mentioned,<sup>115</sup> which is to be an occasion of becoming clean and of appearing of the King. PT 728 goes further to claim for the King the day of the new moon as a time of his exaltation.<sup>116</sup> The overall impression of this lunar rite seems to be that of renewal and thus of resurrection. PT 732 considers the Moon to be born at the beginning of every cycle, much like the Sun is.<sup>117</sup> The King wishes to partake of the lunar festivity and to become new, pure and manifest – this rejuvenating power is characteristic of the Moon that is not related to Thoth. Most the spells firmly ground this in a ritual context, assuring the King that a „shrine will be made for him“.

A different emphasis is made by transition spells: in PT 507 the Moon is the King's father<sup>118</sup>, in PT 481 it is his brother.<sup>119</sup> Little else of the Moon is stated by these two spells.

It is clear that apart from the ritual references to lunar festivities, concerned with purification and renewal, there are statements about the Moon in the Pyramid Texts that consider it a symbol of transition. This dual approach towards the lunar body is interesting and likely resonates the reality of the two lunar cycles that can be observed in nature. Like the Sun, the Moon traverses the sky every day, providing a source of light for the otherwise dark and unruly hours of the night. As the world goes, however, the Moon also undergoes a visible transformation of form during its monthly lunar cycle, waning as it moves towards the Sun, growing as it circles around the Earth away from it. The lunar cycle evoked an image of rebirth to the Egyptian, the new-moon day being literally a day of the Moon's birth out of apparent darkness, when the King too, could hope for personal renewal, purification being a potent metaphor for becoming new again to the Egyptian mind.<sup>120</sup>

The Sun had very similar connotations, albeit on a smaller time scale and, of course, with much greater prominence as from about the 4th dynasty on the solar deities dominated Egyptian religion all the way to the christian era. Its daily life-cycle was an archetype of vitality, which the deceased in particular wished to emulate, rising every morning to renewed life only to fall into slumber at dusk.<sup>121</sup>

With the regenerative aspect of the Moon realizing itself in the symbolism of the monthly cycle, the daily cycle of the Moon was left to represent a distinct aspect, one concerned with transition. This layer of lunar symbolism is the one we find manifesting in the PT 210, PT 406 and possibly PT 262 and it is indicative of Thoth's nature that while there is no mention of him in the lunar sacerdotal texts, he is present in a significant part

115 §794b; PT\*728 §13.

116 PT\*728 §13.

117 §732b: *ms=k jr jbd.w=k mr j'ḥ*.

118 §1104a-b: *j.wd=f NN n jt=f j'ḥ*.

119 §1001b: *sn NN pw j'ḥ*.

120 For purification as rebirth, see P. J. Frandsen, "Bwt in the body", p. 158.

121 See Rudolf Anthes, "Das Sonnenauge in den Pyramidentexten", ZÄS 86 (1961): 1–21.

of the lunar transition texts. Moon could serve as a transition symbol without the overwhelming connotations of the Sun, which was a universal entity governing life in general and was casually used as *pars pro toto* for the Egyptian cosmos.



### 3. THE KING AS THOTH IN TRANSITION SPELLS

#### 3.1 IDENTIFICATION WITH A DIVINITY IN THE PYRAMID TEXTS

Two dominant motifs of transition have been pointed out so far, both in their own way expressing the specific role Thoth has in the Pyramid Texts. The spells discussed until now had the merit of being restricted to a very limited set of images, allowing us to directly pinpoint the meaning of Thoth in them by the distinctiveness of the Wing motif and the relative infrequency of lunar symbolism in the personal texts. This chapter presents a motif quite distinct from the two, one which presents Thoth in a position of central importance, accentuating the traits only hinted at before: the Thoth as identified with the King.

The Pyramid texts employ a number of strategies to pursue the goal of royal ascension to everlasting life.<sup>122</sup> One of the more frequent of these is identification with a divine being, a motif typical for funerary texts and for Egyptian religion in general. Without delving too deeply into the complicated issue it can be stated that the various gods and goddesses of Egypt represent powers of the universe, which are abstract enough not to be thought of as discrete individuals, but rather as unifying principles of cosmic phenomena of which a person, royal or not, can partake and thus gain their specific power to use as he or she needs.<sup>123</sup> The most prominent example of this in the Pyramid Texts is of course the identification of the King with Osiris, which is visible throughout the corpus in the phrase "Osiris NN". In this way the King ties the story of his own demise with the drama of Osiris' murder and resurrection, thereby securing for himself a new life as a ruler of the blessed dead. This principle is to a lesser extent applied by the King to many of the Pyramid texts' deities, Thoth included.

#### 3.2 PT 524: KING AS (THE BRINGER OF) THE EYE OF HORUS

Three spells of transition – PT 524, PT 570 and PT 669 – contain a claim of the royal person's identity with Thoth, each in a specific way and with a particular purpose in mind. PT 524 opens with a clear statement of identification:<sup>124</sup>

"NN has become clean in the cleaning that Horus made for his eye. NN is Thoth, who tended you, (eye); NN is not Seth, who took it. Become happy, gods! Become aroused, Dual Ennead!<sup>125</sup> Horus, meet this NN, for this NN is wearing

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122 W. Barta, *Die Bedeutung der Pyramidentexte für den Verstorbenen König*, p. 71–82.

123 H. Frankfort, *Ancient Egyptian Religion*, p. 20–22. Cf. Erik Hornung, *Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt*, p. 93–99.

124 On the relationship between the King, Thoth and the Eye of Horus in PT 524, see Katja Goebis, "Some Cosmic Aspects of the Royal Crowns", in Christopher J. Eyre (ed.), *Proceedings of the Seventh International Congress of Egyptologists, Cambridge, 3–9 September 1995*, 1998, Leuven: Peeters, p. 447–460.

125 I. e. all the gods. See Lana Troy, "The Ennead: The Collective as Goddess", in Gertie

the White Crown, Horus's eye, through which one becomes powerful."<sup>126</sup>

The King's identity with Thoth is reiterated again in §1237, where he is called "Thoth, the gods' forceful one."<sup>127</sup> Furthermore, in §1235 the King's body-parts are identified with those of a falcon, a jackal and Thoth himself. The explicit mention of Thoth as opposed to the animals, which usually represent Horus and Wepwawet, both being gods with whom the King is identified in the Pyramid Texts,<sup>128</sup> marks an emphasis on Thoth in this spell in contrast with the two gods.<sup>129</sup> The whole spell should be read as a speech by Thoth, who here acts as an officiating being.<sup>130</sup>

Numerous references to the myth of Thoth and the Eye are found in the spell. Being Thoth, the King takes it from the head of Seth,<sup>131</sup> evades his malicious influence<sup>132</sup> and returns it to Horus<sup>133</sup> at the head of a retinue of deities.<sup>134</sup> Through the action of the King can Horus regain full sight and prosecute his foes, the divine order of the world restored with the power of the healed Eye at Horus' disposal.<sup>135</sup> The logic of the spell is clear at this point: the King is the force that can maintain the balance of the world and the gods, wishing Horus' restoration, are to help the King to ascend to the heavens to allow Horus to be reunited with his precious organ, the transition being the ultimate goal of the King.<sup>136</sup> This relationship is to go on forever, Horus being perpetually restored by the King's retrieval of the his Eye.<sup>137</sup>

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Englund (ed.) *The Religion of the Ancient Egyptians: Cognitive Structures and Popular Expressions: Proceedings of Symposia in Uppsala and Bergen, 1987 and 1988*, Uppsala: S. Academiae Ubsaliensis, p. 59–69.

126 §1233a–1234b: *wꜥb NN m ꜥbw jr=n ḥrw n jr.t=f NN pw dhw.tj nd ꜥn nj NN js pw stš jt s nḥn.jj ntr.w j.ḥꜥꜣ psd.tj ḥrw ḥsf.tj m NN pn wtz NN pn ḥd.t jr.t ḥrw wsr.t jm.*

127 §1237c: *NN pw dhw.tj nḥt ntr.w.*

128 John Gwyn Griffiths, *The Origins of Osiris*, Berlin: Hessling, 1966, p. 24.

129 See above 1.8.

130 Harold M. Hays, "Between Identity and Agency in Ancient Egyptian Ritual", in Rune Nyord, Annette Kjølbj, *Being in Ancient Egypt: Thoughts on Agency, Materiality and Cognition: Proceedings of the Seminar Held in Copenhagen, September 29–30, 2006*, Oxford: Archaeopress, 2009, p. 26.

131 §1242c.

132 §1236c.

133 §1243a–c.

134 §1239a–b.

135 §1240a–b.

136 W. Barta, *Die Bedeutung der Pyramidentexte für den verstorbenen König*, p. 145.

137 §1243c.

PT 524 in a peculiar way shows the exact nature of the role of Thoth in transition and the myth of the Eye of Horus. Looking back to PT 359, the Wing spell where the symbolism of the Eye of Horus is most prominent, it can be seen that while Thoth is present and takes a key role in saving the Eye of Horus from Seth. Unlike in PT 524, however, the King is imagined as a person of his own and Thoth is relegated to a secondary role marked by his objectification, as was found above.<sup>138</sup> The situation in PT 359 is a result of the maiming of Horus and Seth and ends in reconciliation. The events in-between expound the transition of the Eye, which is sought and reclaimed by the King, who contests Seth's claim on it. The King usurping over his role by legitimizing his right of passage by taking on the quest for the Eye himself, Thoth retains only the bare core of his nature in the spell. While in the Wing spells it is the case that Thoth is generally overtaken by the King, who wishes to hold as much authority as possible to secure his ascension, PT 524 allows one to see Thoth not at the nadir of his power but at its peak as the various strengths of the deity serve the ends of the King.<sup>139</sup>

A key element of the spell manifests in the way the spell intentionally downplays the distinction between Thoth and the Eye of Horus. According to some versions of the myth, Thoth was born out of Seth's forehead, who has been tricked to ingest Horus's semen, thereby being impregnated by him.<sup>140</sup> While in the *Contendings* Thoth only removes a "sun-disc" from the forehead of Seth, as is the case here in PT 524,<sup>141</sup> a version is attested, where it is Thoth himself who is the result of the two fighters' sexual encounter.<sup>142</sup> This idea can be found to be expressed in the Pyramid Texts directly in Thoth's epithet "Cutter"<sup>143</sup>

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138 See above, 1.6.

139 The Pyramid Texts in general seem to minimize the impediments of the royal person. See Hans Goedicke, "The Bright Eye of Horus: Pyr. Spell 204", in Ingrid Gamer-Wallert, Wolfgang Helck (eds.), *Gegengabe: Festschrift für Emma Brunner-Traut*, Tübingen: Attempto, 1992, p. 101.

140 *Chester Beatty I*, 12,12–13,2. Full publication in Alan H. Gardiner, *The Library of A. Chester Beatty: Description of a Hieratic Papyrus with a Mythological Story, Love-songs, and other miscellaneous texts*, London: Emery Walker, 1931. A hieroglyphic rendition is found in Alan H. Gardiner, *Late-Egyptian Stories*, Brussels: Fondation égyptologique Reine Élisabeth, 1932, p. 37–60.

141 §1242a-c: "NN is the one who prevents the gods from turning away from Horus's eye. This NN sought it in Pe and found it in Heliopolis, and this NN took it from Seth's head in the place where he and Seth fought." *NN pw ḥw nnw ntr.w m zhn.w jr.t ḥrw ḥḥ.n s NN p gm.n s m jwn.w šd.n s NN m tp stš m bw pw ḥz=sn jm.*

142 See Hermann Kees, "Zu den ägyptischen Mondsagen", in *ZÄS* 60 (1925): 1–15.

143 The term *mds* meaning both "knife" and "violent one", Allen's translation "knife-bearer" expresses the two levels of meaning of the word, but does not emphasize enough the fierce connotations. A wordplay on the meanings of *mds* "to be sharp; to be perceptive" is possibly present as well, with Thoth being a god later known for the soundness of his senses and wit.

who came forth from Seth".<sup>144</sup> The Eye of Horus could easily be identified with the solar disc, but it could also be made to represent the lunar disc, i. e. Thoth and the White crown, which is in this spell equated with the Eye of Horus, is itself a prominent lunar symbol tied to Thoth. All the elements presented here – Thoth, the White crown, the Cutter that came from Seth – are all related through the central symbol of the Eye of Horus, an entity characterized by its protective luminosity.<sup>145</sup> The Eye is an emblem of order that is harmed by contact with disorder, but eventually emerges stronger by coming to terms with the chaotic. Thus the Eye returned imbues Horus with the power to smite his foes and Thoth can be deemed the "gods' forceful one",<sup>146</sup> a god who can bring harmony to the world by rejoining Horus with his Eye and bringing Osiris' enemies to him, acts that are semantically analogous in some Pyramid texts. As the Cutter who came from Seth, Thoth too partakes of the luminous quality of the Eye as the Moon, but also does so in the image of a gleaming knife of metal,<sup>147</sup> a tool for the protection of the gods, as will be seen in the sacerdotal texts.<sup>148</sup> Consequently, the King himself becomes the Eye of Horus and partaking of its purity and fragrance is turned into a being greatly desired by the divine denizens of the sky, much like in PT 478, where again the King is said to have "appeared as the uraeus on Seth's brow."<sup>149</sup>

In conclusion, looking at the spell as a whole it can be stated that PT 524 exhibits many of the traits of the transition spells described above, such as the confirmation of the King's purity ("the King has become clean in the cleaning that Horus made for his eye"), the denial of any opposition to his passage ("there is . . . no adversary who can cross this King's path"), or divine justification for his ascent ("Atum has summoned this King to the sky"). The Eye of Horus appears as the dominant motif throughout the spell, and the King assumes the identity of Thoth to optimize his claim on the Eye: the King brings the Eye for the gods to the sky, he is empowered by it and he is the Eye itself.

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144 §1906b: *jw n=k dhw.tj mds pr m stš*; §1999c: *mjz.z.w tp.w rmn.wj dhw.tj*.

145 K. Goebis, "Some Cosmic Aspects of the Royal Crowns", p. 451. See also H. Kees, "Zu den ägyptischen Mondsagen", p. 1–2.

146 §1237c.

147 The term *mds*, translated here as "Cutter", may denote not only a person cutting, but also a tool, most often a knife.

148 K. Goebis, "Some Cosmic Aspects of the Royal Crowns", p. 451.

149 Cf. §1234, where the Eye of Horus is worn as a crown, for which the uraeus is a usual metaphor. See S. B. Mercer, *Horus: Royal God of Egypt*, p. 151; Tatiana A. Sherkova, "The Birth of the Eye of Horus: Towards the Symbolism of the Eye in Predynastic Egypt", in Christopher J. Eyre (ed.), *Proceedings of the Seventh International Congress of Egyptologists, Cambridge, 3-9 September 1995*, Leuven: Peeters. 1998, p. 1064.

### 3.3 PT 570: THOTH AND THE URAEUS OF SETH

The second case of the King's identification with Thoth takes place in PT 570,<sup>150</sup> again a spell of considerable length and complexity. The spell is composed of a number of identifications of the King with various beings and items, who thus holds divine authority<sup>151</sup> and partakes of their permanence.<sup>152</sup> While Thoth is explicitly mentioned only at the very end of the spell where he is urged to listen,<sup>153</sup> another less obvious, but more interesting reference to him can be found in the spell. About halfway through the spell these sentences are found:

"NN is the uraeus that came from Seth, that acquires and fetches: let this NN proceed, let him live."<sup>154</sup>

The phrase "uraeus that came from Seth" immediately brings to mind PT478, cited in the previous sub-chapter.<sup>155</sup> This time, however, a specific nature is attributed to the divine snake: it is an acquirer, a fetcher. While these motifs have not been described until now, the analysis of Thoth's role in the sacerdotal texts – one that will be presented in later chapters – shows that the act of fetching is essential to Thoth, who is frequently ordered to bring items and beings for Horus, Osiris and the King.<sup>156</sup> Furthermore, it is also attested in the Pyramid Texts that Thoth himself was born of Seth, an idea attested in later sources, including the curious rendition presented in the *Contendings*.<sup>157</sup>

The designation "uraeus" is, of course, unusual here and deserves comment. The *Contendings* have a sun-disc emerge from Seth, a symbol clearly distinct from the uraeus, and neither is Thoth usually envisioned as a snake, the uraeus being generally a form particular to the goddesses, especially the ones associated with female destructive power. Here the polyvalence and interdependence of Egyptian religious symbols come into play.

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150 §1456a–1465e. Titled "PT 570B" in Allen's *Pyramid Texts*.

151 §1456a–1458e.

152 §1465e.

153 §1465b.

154 §1459b–c: *NN pw jr.t pr.t m stš jt.t jn.t sdz NN s'nh sw.*

155 See above, note no. 93.

156 Harold M. Hays, *Organization of the Pyramid Texts*, p. 677.

157 *Chester Beatty I*, 12,12–13,2. In the myth Seth attempts to prove himself superior to Horus by dominating him sexually. Isis suspects the designs of Seth and helps Horus trick Seth into ingesting the semen of Horus, who himself manages to stay unmolested by Seth's seed by having the hand with which he caught the seed cut off. When the seed of the two gods is called to testify before the council of gods, the seed of Horus comes out of the head of Seth as a solar disc, showing Horus' victory. Seth attempts to strike down the disc, but Thoth snatches it and places it upon his head. For the homosexual act as a violation of an enemy, see Richard Bruce Parkinson, " 'Homosexual' Desire and Middle Kingdom Literature, *JEA* 81 (1995): 74–75.

Taking the relatively simple examples of the titulary goddesses Wadjet and Nekhbet, we see deities that are both identified with royal crowns and the uraei that are present on them.<sup>158</sup> In PT 524 the Eye of Horus itself is considered to be a crown. These statements are of course metaphorical: the crown is a sign of authority and power and to wear it is to have this power at your disposal. The uraei can also be used in this manner. Being representations of female force, protecting the King by spitting fire on malefactors, they are a desired attribute for the royal person. The line of associations, however, did not stop here for the Egyptian mind. The uraeus was also used to describe the solar eye in its aspect of a fierce woman and this apotropaic feminine force could also represent the Eye of Horus.<sup>159</sup> The very same female power is exhibited by the Eye of Re, as in the form Sakhmet in the Destruction of Mankind, where she is sent on a rampage against the rebellious subjects of her father, the sun-god.<sup>160</sup> The eye-goddesses and the uraei-goddesses form aspects of the single complex of female deities concerned with protection, martial power and aggressive femininity. An idea of a dangerous force that can be used to protect order underlies the uraeus as a symbol.<sup>161</sup>

Coming back to PT 570 with this in mind, the lunar aspect of Thoth seems to be addressed here at the first glance. The distinction between Sun and Moon was sometimes diminished, particularly when the motif of the Eye of Horus was invoked.<sup>162</sup> This is also the case here, as the uraeus was already said to be closely tied with the solar eye, which is itself hardly distinguishable from the Eye of Horus in the Pyramid Texts.<sup>163</sup> All the connotations of the term "uraeus", however, are here aimed at Thoth as well: while these have as yet

158 For an outline of the the character of Nekhbet, her role in the coronation, royal protection, and her relationship to Wadjet, see René Preys, "Nekhbet, l'œil droit du dieu solaire", *RdE* 61 (2010): 159–177. On the goddesses as a fixed pair and their relationship to the pair Isis-Nephthys, see Ali Radwan, "Nekhbet with Wadjet or Isis with Nephtys: The Lasting Concept of two Goddesses in Ancient Egypt", in Nicolas Grimal, Amr Kamel, and Cynthia May-Sheikholeslami (eds.), *Hommages à Fayza Haikal*, Cairo: Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 2003, p. 217–224. See also Henri Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods: A Study in Near Eastern Religion as the Integration of Society and Nature*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948, p. 107.

159 John Coleman Darnell, "The Apotropaic Goddess in the Eye", *Studien zur altägyptischen Kultur* 24 (1997): 39–40.

160 R. Preys, "Nekhbet, l'œil droit du dieu solaire", p. 172–175.

161 *Ibid.*, p. 161.

162 S. B. Mercer, *Horus: Royal God of Egypt*, p. 151–152.

163 See §698d, where the *jr.t r* of the versions of Teti and Pepi I is replaced by *jr.t hr.w* in that of Pepi II. For both Eye of Horus and Eye of Re as the vedjat-eye, see *CT IV 238/9d-242/3c* (=BD 17). The edition of the Coffin Texts used in this work is Claude Carrier, *Textes des sarcophages du Moyen Empire égyptien*, 3 vols., Paris: Rocher, 2004. See also Ursula Rösler-Köhler, *Kapitel 17 des ägyptisches Totenbuches: Untersuchungen zur Textgeschichte und Funktion eines Textes der altägyptischen Totenliteratur*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1979, p. 219; J. C. Darnell, "The Apotropaic Goddess in the Eye", p. 35–36.

been left undiscussed, Thoth has a prominent martial facet, one of a brutal, dangerous avenger, hinted upon by the attribute "that acquires and fetches", the "fetching" most often being in the Pyramid Texts the fetching of the King's enemies, who are to be slaughtered by Thoth himself. As will be seen in the chapters to follow, this savage nature of Thoth corresponds sensibly with the destructive aspect of the eye-goddesses, who too complement a role of protector and supporter with that of the destroyer, and is inexorably tied with his relationship with the malevolent and yet sometimes beneficent Seth.<sup>164</sup>

### 3.4 PT 669: "HE WHOM THE GREAT HEAT FORETOLD"

One of the more interesting spells of the corpus, PT 669, is the last one of the personal category where the idea of identification of Thoth with the King is present. The majority of the spell is curiously enough composed by a dialogue of Isis with a group of deities, who discuss the breaking of the King's egg. The conversation first secures bindings for the impaired King from the metal of Sokar-boat, and the spell moves on to break the egg open with Sokar's harpoons, the King flying to the heavens on the Sokar-boat and the wings of Geb. The dialogue form is unusual for the Pyramid texts, as is the prominence of Isis, a deity appreciated relatively more by Egyptians of later times.<sup>165</sup> Apart from these peculiarities, however, the latter part of PT 669 presents a comprehensible idea of divine rebirth and transition. The first part of the spell, namely from §1961a to §1963b, too is concerned with the coming of the King, but addresses the question in a different manner:

"He whom the great heat foretold has come forth from the interior Akhet and has seen the arrangement of the festival calendar and the making of the braziers on the birth of the gods on the five epagomenal gods on your arms, Great-Breasted One in front of the inductees.<sup>166</sup> [ ... ] NN [has been given birth] by his mother<sup>167</sup> in a rebirth in the nest [of] Thoth inside the Tamarisk Marsh, the gods' source. For NN is (your) brother, who has come as a wise one who parts the two and splits up the two fighters, (Horus and Seth) – and who can split your heads, gods."<sup>168</sup>

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164 H. Te Velde, *Seth: God of Confusion*, p. 100-108.

165 Reginald Eldred Witt, *Isis in the Ancient World*, Baltimore – London: John Hopkins University Press, 1997, 336 p.

166 The term *bzt.w* is untranslatable, the determinative only showing that a group of divine beings is meant. It should be noted however, that the CT version of the spell has another *hapax j<sup>c</sup>b.wt* in place of *bzt.w*. (CT VI, 308k–o).

167 Allen translates as "his mother Begetter", but the original reads simply *mw.t=f* "his mother".

168 §1961a-1963b: *pr sr.w kr ʕ m ʕh.t hnw.tt mʕ.n=f sjpp hʕb.t jr.t ʕhw.t m ms.wt ntr.w m hr.w-rnp.t 5 hr ʕ.wj=k wr-mnd=f jm.j hʕ.t bzt.w gm=k NN ʕ r hʕ.t ʕ=k mm nw jr.w rn.w=sn ms NN jn mjw.t=f tw.t m ms.wt whm.t m sʕ n dhw.tj m hnw sh.t jzr m šnm.t ntr.w n n.tt NN js pw sn pr m sbk wp sn.wj pšn hʕ.wj pšn tp.w=tn ntr.w. Cf. CT VI, 308k–o.*

The best place to begin interpreting this section is from its end. There the King is said to be born in a "nest of Thoth",<sup>169</sup> being a "wise one, who parts the two and splits up (*pšn*) the two fighters"<sup>170</sup>. All these refer to known traits of Thoth, whose primary role in later mythology is the reconciliation of Horus and Seth, the archetypal "two fighters", and who has traditionally been a paragon of wisdom in the divine world. This enough is sure about this section of PT 669: the King is born as Thoth, threatening potential rivals with "splitting" of heads, a word-play on *pšn*.

The beginning of the spell is harder to understand. It might be sensible to assume that the King is referred to with the epithet "he whom the great heat foretold", as it can be generally said that he is the most usual subject of a spell. This of course says very little as what rather needs to be asked is in what capacity or as whom does the King figure here. By §1962b it is clear that the King is Thoth and several of the motifs of the preceding sentences seem to point that the same is true of the initial part of PT 669 as a whole.

First, the coming of the King is "foretold by the great heat (*kr*, literally "fire")."<sup>171</sup> Chronological references follow, speaking of the "arrangement of the festival calendar"<sup>172</sup> and the epagomenal days, possibly also referring to their rituals.<sup>173</sup> An interpretation of these segments is possible where Thoth is related to all: the great heat marks the apex of the Eye's rage, the last days of the hot, dry season of harvest before the coming of the inundation, mythically rendered in Thoth's retrieval of the lion goddess, which could also be understood simply as the return of the divine Eye, itself a symbol of Thoth. The "arrangement" or "inspection" may also refer to him, both through his priestly/scribal role and through the inherently lunar nature of the Egyptian ritual calendar.<sup>174</sup> The epagomenal days are compared to these very prominently tied to Thoth, who is in the myth considered the creator of the five birth-days of heliopolitan deities, snatching them by fractions from the Moon to give Nut time to give birth, the other days of the year being denied to her by the sun-god.<sup>175</sup>

Finally, it should be noted that the Tamarisk Marsh (*sh.t jzr*) is usually considered a birthplace of Horus,<sup>176</sup> while it is quite clear from the context that here it is supposed to be a place of the King's rebirth into Thoth. It is possible that a closer relationship between O and Thoth is established here, referring to Horus' fatherhood of Thoth, or that the King, being still considered Horus at some points in the Pyramid Spells, is reborn from Horus

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169 §1962b.

170 §1963a–b.

171 §1961a: *pr sr.w kr ʿz m sh.t hnw.tt.*

172 1961b.

173 1961b–c.

174 Patrick Boylan, *Thoth: The Hermes of Egypt*, p. 84.

175 *Ibid.*, p. 78–79.

176 J. P. Allen, *Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, p. 442.



into Thoth to ensure his transition into the desired state, identifiable with Osiris. It is of note that a tradition would manifest later in Egyptian history that would equate Osiris and the Moon in the composite deity Osiris-Iah.<sup>177</sup> The birthplace of Horus would also serve well as his place of rebirth.

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<sup>177</sup> Osiris-Iah is known mainly through his statues and iconography in general. See John Gwyn Griffiths, "Osiris and the moon in iconography", *JEA* 62 (1976): 153–159; Erhart Graefe, "Noch einmal Osiris-Lunus", *JEA* 65 (1979): 171–173. For a newer commentary and a typology of the statues of Osiris-Iah, see Christiane Ziegler, "Les Osiris-Lunes du Serapeum de Memphis", in Sylvia Shoske (ed.), *Akten des vierten internationalen ägyptologischen Kongress München 1985*, Hamburg: Helmut Buske Verlag, 1989, p. 441–453. The most comprehensive work on Osiris-Iah is Pierre P. Koemoth, "Osiris-Lune, l'horizon et l'œil oudjat", *CdE* 71 (1996): 203–220. Compared to older articles, greater emphasis is put on textual sources. The situation in the Pyramid Texts is mentioned at the beginning. For the lunar aspect of Osiris in the Pyramid Texts, see also Hermann Kees, *Totenglauben und Jenseits-Vorstellungen der alten Ägypter: Grundlagen und Entwicklung bis zum Ende des Mittleren Reiches*, Leipzig: Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1926, p. 14.

## 4. GOD OF THE WEST: THOTH AND HORUS IN TRANSITION

The last major personal motif of Thoth in the corpus is the pairing of Horus and Thoth.<sup>178</sup> Occurring relatively frequently in the Pyramid texts, the two gods generally join forces to provide service to the deceased. This chapter will map the spells relevant to this motif, including an excursus into the sacerdotal texts that also include the particular type of Horus-Thoth grouping that will be described here.

### 4.1 THOTH AS A GOD OF THE WEST IN SACERDOTAL TEXTS

As has already been indicated, the two gods are found together in a variety of contexts. This precludes an analysis like that of the wing of Thoth. Rather than presenting the whole corpus of relevant spells, this chapter will first propose a hermeneutic key and proceed to attempt to apply it on the group of spells under discussion.

In PT 217, the King is presented to Atum-Re, joining the sun-god in his daily travel across the sky. Four sections of the spell have the elevated status of King be heralded to the deities of the four cardinal points. Each of these has a special herald or heralds: Seth and Nephthys for the North (*šm<sup>c</sup>.w* "Upper Egypt"), Osiris and Isis for the South (*mḥ.w* "Lower Egypt"), Horus for the East and Thoth for the West.<sup>179</sup> In his study of the replacement of Seth by Thoth in relief scenes, Gardiner found that just as Horus formed a meaningful pair with Seth on a north-south axis as emblem deities of Upper and Lower Egypt, so did he form one with Thoth on the east-west axis, each pair representing a differently emphasized cosmic totality.<sup>180</sup>

In a number of spells equating the King's various provisions with those of the gods, the symbolism of the cardinal points once again shows itself. In PT 35, a spell of the Offering Ritual, four gods represent these:

"Your natron is Horus's natron; your natron is Seth's natron; your natron is Thoth's natron; your natron is the god's natron: your own natron is amongst them."<sup>181</sup>

The same grouping of deities, the "god" being sometimes replaced with the proper name Dunanwi can also be found in PT 36 and PT 591, a similar arrangement also being present in PT 23. In these Horus is grouped with Seth, representing the south and the north respectively in contrast with PT 217. Thoth, however, still retains his connection with the west.

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178 See M. Stadler, *Weiser und Wesir*, p. 305–314.

179 §153a–159c. For Thoth as a god of the West, see Bernard Bruyère, "Fouilles de Deir el Médineh (1935-1940)", *FIFAO* 20 (1952): 94–104.

180 Alan H. Gardiner, "Baptism of the Pharaoh", p. 13.

181 §27a–27c: *snṯr=k snṯr ḥr.w snṯr=k snṯr stš snṯr=k snṯr dhw.tj snṯr=k snṯr nṯr snṯr=k snṯr ddkṯ jm.t=sn.*

#### 4.2 BELTED AS HORUS, CLOTHED AS THOTH

Having established Thoth's identity of a god of the west, it is possible to return to the personal texts. The specific instance of Horus-Thoth relationship that will be discussed here is a juxtaposition of the two gods, where both are specifically described as clothed. In each of the three attestations of this motif – PT 505, PT 576 and sPT 1064 – the King is described as being attired like the two gods, their dress explicitly becoming his one case. In PT 576 and sPT 1064 is the phrase rendered as *št m hr.w dbz m dhw.tj* ("banded as Horus, clothed as Thoth"),<sup>182</sup> in PT 505 in a more complex form as *št NN m št n hr.w hbs NN m hbs n dhw.tj* ("banded with the bands of Horus, clothed in the clothing of Thoth") The phrase *št n hrw* itself is attested four times in the corpus, constituting in Hays' typology a distinct transition motif, termed "Is Belted (ST) as Horus", with PT 555 being the category's fourth member.<sup>183</sup> In this spell Thoth is replaced with *psd.tj* ("Two Enneads"), but it should be noted that he is nevertheless present in the spell, as was seen above in chapter 1.2.<sup>184</sup>

While a temptation presents itself to imagine particular pieces of clothing as the focus of these spells, the general terms used – *dbz*, *št*, *hbs*<sup>185</sup> – indicate that this is not the case and attention should be pointed rather at the pairing itself. If the spells as a whole are considered, a shared idea of ascent is found and the motif is indeed classified by Hays as a transition one.<sup>186</sup> The context of movement, however, varies significantly. PT 505 is a ferryman spell with a stairway providing an additional means of transportation, while in PT 576 the central idea is the King's merging with the Sun. sPT 1064 has already been commented upon above, the central motif being a ladder to the sky.

It is hard to point out a common factor in relation to the motif in question. It might be argued that the east-west axis alluded to by the grouping of Horus of Seth is present due to the westward nature of the transition as described above in the ferryman spells. The question of course, is more general: Why is Thoth connected with the west? The best way to answer that is by pointing out the nature of Horus' relation to the east. The east is a place of rebirth, particularly solar rebirth. It symbolizes life, power, restoration of order: everything positive about the Sun of the Egyptian cosmos. In contrast with that, the west is a place of death. Of course, death always implies rebirth, but they are nevertheless distinct symbols, as are the Sun and the Moon. The latter being identified with Thoth, as has already been shown, the former is associated with Horus, who personifies the very same royal power, the Sun often being called "Horus of the Horizon" (*hr.w-zh.tj*) and Horus also probably being the dominant solar deity before the ascent of heliopolitan Re during the 4th

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182 §1507a; P/V/E 44. The section in sPT 1064 is partially reconstructed based on other attestations of the motif.

183 H. M. Hays, *Organization of the Pyramid Texts*, p. 546.

184 §1254d.

185 All the terms can be translated loosely as "garments, clothes", with *dbz* possibly having a ritual connotation. (*Wb* 5, 560.10-11).

186 H. M. Hays, *Organization of the Pyramid Texts*, p. 546.

dynasty.<sup>187</sup> By the time of the Pyramid Texts the Sun was almost always represented by the eponymal Re and his nightly form Atum, Horus however must have retained some of the solar nature, possibly becoming a symbol less overpowering than the greater Re, but still able to represent the Sun in such a way as to create a meaningful and equal duality with Thoth as the Moon. Both of them could thus embody not only the two cardinal points that would thus be given at the King's disposal, but also the more abstract ideas related to them through the major symbols of the Sun and the Moon, both emblems of transition, rejuvenation and existence itself through the duality of day and night.

#### 4.3 HORUS AND THOTH IN PURIFICATION SPELLS

Before the chapter is closed, one more case of the pairing needs to be addressed. The motif in question is a minor one, being present in only two texts – PT 323 and PT 526 – the first, remarkably enough, a sacerdotal transition text, the other a personal one. Apart from the grammatical person, however, the motif is obviously present in both:

"NN has become clean [with the Sun] in the lake of Reeds. Horus is scrubbing your flesh, NN;<sup>188</sup> Thoth is scrubbing your feet, NN. Shu, carry NN [above]; Nut, give your arm to NN."<sup>189</sup>

"NN has become clean in the lake of reeds, in which the Sun has become clean. Horus, scrub the back of NN! Thoth, scrub NN's feet! Shu, take NN to the sky! Nut, give your arm to NN!"<sup>190</sup>

Were it not for the difference in category, the two spells might easily pass for variants of the same, but as Hays clearly shows, both come from different sources.<sup>191</sup> The spells themselves are quite laconic and little else can be said of Horus and Thoth than that they take part in the King's purification in the context of his ascension to the sky. The hypothesis of the preceding sub-chapter is as applicable here as there, with the dual focus on purity/rebirth and transition, and there is little to be inferred from the back-feet dichotomy constructed here.<sup>192</sup>

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187 Stephen Quirke, *The Cult of Ra*, London: Thames and Hudson, 2001, 184 p.

188 Royal name present in the versions of Pepi and Merenre.

189 §519a-c: *w<sup>c</sup>b.n NN ḥn<sup>r</sup> r<sup>c</sup> m šj jzr.w hr.w zjn=f jf=k NN dḥw.tj zjn=f rd.wj=k NN šw fš NN jr jr ḥr nw.t j.mj <sup>c</sup>ṯ n NN.*

190 §1247a-d: *w<sup>c</sup>b.n NN m šj jzr.w w<sup>c</sup>b.n r<sup>c</sup> jm=f ḥr.w zjn sš n NN dḥw.tj zjn rd.wj NN šw šd NN jr p.t nw.t dj <sup>c</sup>ṯ n NN.*

191 H. M. Hays, *Organization of the Pyramid Texts*, p. 369, 407.

192 The foot (*rd*) functions as a container of power and support, while the particular term for back used here (*s<sup>c</sup>*) is treated by the texts as a surface upon which objects are placed. This opposed to the other term for back (*psd*), which has the connotations of strength and fortitude of "backbone" (Rune Nyord, *Breathing Flesh: Conceptions of the Body in the Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts*, Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 2009, p.

The pairing of Horus and Thoth here might be explained by the claim of Gardiner's already mentioned above at 4.1.<sup>193</sup> The idea of Horus and Thoth representing a basic dichotomy of east and west is based by Gardiner on his study of relief art, where he shows that there is no reason to take the "baptism" scenes of Thoth and Horus abluting the King as variants of the more prominent pairing of Horus and Seth. His finding is that the pairing of Horus and Thoth has special connotations of purification, being used mostly in the scenes of royal cleansing, often within a context of coronation "baptism".<sup>194</sup> While there is little in PT323 and PT526 that would imply Horus' and Thoth's role as gods of cardinal points, the purification symbolism seems to point this way.

The scope of this thesis prevents a deeper study of the issue, but it is unlikely more can be learned of these two very short and similar spells. It might be prudent to accept the thesis of Gardiner and treat the pairing of Horus and Thoth in PT323 and PT526 as instances of the two gods' role of cardinal points deities as was the case in the other spells treated in this chapter.

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138–139, 280).

193 Alan H. Gardiner, "Baptism of the Pharaoh", p. 11.

194 Ibid.

## 5. MINOR MOTIFS OF THE PERSONAL TEXTS

Seven spells of the personal category mentioning Thoth remain undiscussed: PT 279, PT 304, PT 327, PT 511, PT 539, PT 583 and PT 694B. All of these are either very short, as is the case of PT 279, or have Thoth play only a very minor role. More importantly, none of the seven spells contain any of the motifs of Thoth already described, but rather present him in new contexts. This chapter will present these seven "miscellaneous" spells, dividing them roughly into three groups.

### 5.1 THOTH AND ANUBIS

Two personal spells have Thoth appear in conjunction with the embalmer-god Anubis:<sup>195</sup> PT 304 and PT 694B. PT 304 is composed of a four addresses to mythical beings and places, the first of which is to "Anubis's daughter" (*z3.t jnp.w*):<sup>196</sup>

"Greetings, Anubis's daughter at the sky's windows, companion<sup>197</sup> of Thoth, at the ladder's uprights! Open the path of NN, that NN may pass."<sup>198</sup>

The daughter of Anubis is almost certainly the goddess Qebehut, a serpent-deity known mainly from the Pyramid Texts,<sup>199</sup> where she provides cooling<sup>200</sup> and purifying water<sup>201</sup> for the King, with whose middle and hind-parts she is also identified.<sup>202</sup> The goddess here obviously acts as a figure of transition, opening a passage through a sky, here likely envisioned as a window. Thoth is considered her companion, but there is nothing to specify this relationship neither in the Pyramid Texts nor in other works, the goddess being of essentially no importance outside the corpus. An interesting fact is that Qebehut is here treated as a transition figure although in the other spells she is mentioned in she acts as a guarantor of purity and refreshment. It is possible that as in PT 531, Thoth is here invoked to provide transitional capacity to a deity usually not equipped with it.

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195 On Thoth's association with Anubis, see M. Stadler, *Weiser und Wesir*, p. 434–435.

196 The phrase could also be read "daughter of a jackal" (*z3.t z3b*), the jackal being a usual metonymy for Anubis.

197 Allen translates *ptr.w* as "Looking (Waters)", but the term can easily be read as "windows", as is done by Faulkner. The term *hnk.t* is translated by Allen as "she who was endowed", but the reading of Faulkner's, "companion", seems again more probable.

198 §468a–c: *j.nd hr.t z3.t jnp.w hr.t ptr.w p.t hnk.t dhw.tj hr.t m<sup>c</sup>3<sup>c</sup>.wj m3k.t jwn w3.t NN sw3 NN*.

199 Richard H. Wilkinson, *The Complete Gods and Goddesses*, p. 223.

200 §1080b–c.

201 §2013a–b.

202 §1749a; §2128b.

The case of PT 694B is quite different, but similarly perplexing. Here Thoth is juxtaposed with Anubis as the two gods are given reign over different spheres of the world:

"NN is Thoth in authority over sky, NN is Anubis in authority over the house."<sup>203</sup>

The spell itself is very fragmentary and little context can be provided for these sentences, although it seems that the spell opens with "open to NN NN's path, make a path for NN",<sup>204</sup> indicating that PT 694B is a transition spell. The role of Thoth here is again quite hard to evaluate, but the pairing with Anubis might be informative. The house (*pr*) over which Anubis is supposed to be is very likely the embalming tent or pavilion (*pr nfr*),<sup>205</sup> Anubis being the god responsible for Osiris' mummification and thus with embalming in general.<sup>206</sup> This seems to imply a funerary context and possibly the nocturnal rites of the deceased's preparation for the afterlife. That might be the case here since it is after all the nightly sky, over which Thoth – the Moon – is supposed to hold dominion.<sup>207</sup> PT 694B might thus again refer to Thoth's lunar aspect, but it should be emphasized that the section is too condensed to allow a certain interpretation.

## 5.2 THOTH IN SUPPORT OF TRANSITION

Symbolism of transition has been shown in the previous chapters to be very closely tied to Thoth, who is one of the prominent transition figures of the Pyramid Texts. Two personal texts that have not yet been discussed show Thoth in this manner: PT 539 and PT 583. Neither of these two spells presents new information about the god or difficulties of translation, but they will be considered here nevertheless.

The first half of PT 539 is composed of a long list of identifications of gods' body-parts with those of the King, the general form being "the (body-part) of this NN is that/those of [divine name], as he emerges and ascends to the sky".<sup>208</sup> The passage referring to Thoth speaks of the god's nose, which is said to be identical with that of the King.<sup>209</sup> The nose of Thoth is not mentioned anywhere else in the corpus and likely refers to the powerful beak of the ibis-headed deity, whose avian character has been shown to be invoked quite often in the Pyramid Texts. The god here appears in support of the King's ascension, but very little can be inferred from this as he is but one of a great number of

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203 §2150c: *NN p(w) dḥw.tj ḥr tp p.t NN pw jnp.w ḥr tp pr.*

204 §2149b: *j.wn n NN w3.t NN jr w3.t n NN.*

205 John H. Taylor, *Death and Afterlife in Ancient Egypt*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2001, p. 53.

206 Richard H. Wilkinson, *The Complete Gods and Goddesses*, p. 188; John H. Taylor, *Death and Afterlife in Ancient Egypt*, p. 27. See also M. Smith, *The Ceremony of Opening the Mouth for Breathing*, Oxford: Griffith Institute, 1993, p. 13.

207 See above, ch. 2.

208 §1303a–1315d.

209 §1305c.

deities that too allow the King to partake of their bodies as he "emerges and ascends to the sky."

PT 583 too invokes a familiar motif, grouping Thoth with Horus in aid to the royal person. The two gods are said to embrace the King as he ascends in a speech by the fiery goddess of the uraeus:

"You are an ascender, you are my ascender ( ... ) [Before you is] Horus' arm, behind you is Thoth's arm, supporting you. The two gods are making your place in [ ... ]."<sup>210</sup>

The logic of the spell is quite clear: Horus and Thoth physically give support to give the King a place in the sky. As in PT 515 the two gods pair up to provide transition, this spell differing from the many Wing spells only by the inclusion of Thoth himself instead of the more frequent attribute. The case of PT 583 also serves to show that transition symbolism of Thoth isn't particular to the Wing motif and that the symmetrical relationship of Horus and Thoth is a prominent aspect of the mediator role of Thoth, for whom this sort of dependent action is typical.<sup>211</sup>

### 5.3 THOTH THE MARTIAL

A curious member of the personal category is the very short PT 279, a simple spell of warding that exhorts Thoth to an act of violence.<sup>212</sup> Thoth's martial role is very prominent in the sacerdotal texts, as will be shown below, but those spells still differ significantly from PT 279, which is interesting in its laconic directness:<sup>213</sup>

"NN is a trampler, who chops the canals' mud. Thoth, behind NN! Trample the one of the dark (kk.j), trample the one of the dark!"<sup>214</sup>

The spell is clearly meant to have assured the King of his strength and security by having Thoth stomp his vile enemy into the mud. Thoth is marked here as a powerful being, a claim reiterated by the strangely similar PT 777, a spell unclassified by Hays:<sup>215</sup>

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210 §1569a–1571b: *twt šw twt šwj=j j=t m b3h=k ʿ hr.w h3=k ʿ dhw.tj tw3=sn tw ntr.wj ʿ3.w(j) jr=sn jst=k jm.j.*

211 See above 1.6.

212 For an interpretation of a similar spell of protection, PT 551, see Lucas Baqué-Manzano, "Some Comments on PT 551 and Its Translation", *LAe* 20 (2012): 267–270. For a commentary on the specific language of the serpent-spells, see Ogdon, Jorge R. "Studies in Ancient Egyptian magical thought IV: an analysis of the "technical" language in the anti-snake magical spells of the Pyramid Texts (PT)", *DE* 13 (1989): 59–71.

213 For Thoth as a warrior, see M. Stadler, *Weiser und Wesir*, p. 328–332.

214 §420a–b: *NN pj tj kj t3h mr.w dhw.tj h3.j NN tj kk.j tj kk.j.*

215 Faulkner's PT 733.



"Back you night-attacker-snake!"<sup>216</sup> Thoth, the night-attacker-snake's night-attacker, is the one who strikes your marshes."<sup>217</sup>

While the two spells are not significantly similar in content, they both share a certain vibe, an impression shared by both Allen<sup>218</sup> and Faulkner.<sup>219</sup> Both the spells present Thoth in opposition to some unspecified nocturnal threat in an atmosphere of almost panic fear.<sup>220</sup> PT 279 and PT 777 are highly anomalous compared to all the Thoth-spells and even compared with the martial spells of the sacerdotal category still seem remarkably different. These, however, contain the only even remotely similar motifs of Thoth's opposition to hostile powers and the two spells of this sub-chapter should thus probably be related to them.

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216 This translation of *tkk.j* is cumbersome, but takes into account both the night-determinative and the snake-determinative used here.

217 PT\*777 §1–2: *ḥ3=k tkk.j t3ḥ mrw.tjw=k pw dḥw.tj tkk.j tkk.*

218 James. P. Allen, *A New Concordance of the Pyramid Texts I*, p. 286.

219 R. O. Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, p. 314.

220 Ibid.

## **B. THE SACERDOTAL TEXTS: THOTH AND THE HORUS-OSIRIAN MYTH**

The second part of this thesis is dedicated to the role of Thoth in the sacerdotal texts. The topics that will be discussed are many, but, like with the personal texts that almost exclusively dealt with transition, a central issue can be identified that dominates Thoth of the sacerdotal text: the mythical quarrel between Horus and Seth that vindicates the murdered Osiris.

### **1. A FRAMEWORK OF THE MYTH**

The references to the myth are numerous throughout the Pyramid Texts, indicating it was of major importance by the end of the Old Kingdom.<sup>221</sup> While there is of course no version of the myth attested in a linear, narrative form until the *Contendings* of papyrus Chester Beatty I,<sup>222</sup> the numerous allusions and fragments of the myth allow an image of the story to be reconstructed: the purpose of this chapter will be to create such an image to give a comprehensible background against which the various motifs of Thoth can be situated and organized.<sup>223</sup>

The myth of Horus and Seth is a sequel, or rather a latter part of the myth of the death and rebirth of Osiris.<sup>224</sup> As can be read from the two narrative versions of the story – the Great Hymn to Osiris and the *De Iside et Osiride* by Plutarch<sup>225</sup> – the death of Osiris at

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221 For a summary of the sources see J. G. Griffiths, *The Conflict of Horus and Seth*, p. 1–27. V. A. Tobin maintains that there was no general conception of a Horus-Osirian mythos in the Pyramid Texts, myth here is essentially a symbolic system complementing ritual (Vincent Arieh Tobin, "Divine Conflict in the Pyramid Texts", *JARCE* 30 (1993), p. 94–95). This assumption is, however, quite simplistic as it does not take into account the complex reality of the Pyramid Texts' original and final contexts. Furthermore, Tobin's concepts of myth and ritual is too undefined to clearly evaluate the exact nature of his statement.

222 Michèle Broze, *Les Aventures d'Horus et Seth dans le Papyrus Chester Beatty I*, Leuven: Uitgeverij Peters, 1997, p. 135–137.

223 For a critical rendition of the Horus-Osirian mythos and a comparison with Near Eastern epics, see V. A. Tobin, "Divine Conflict in the Pyramid Texts", p. 93–110.

224 Griffiths, *The Origins of Osiris and his Cult*, p. 7. On the essential identity of the two myths to the compilers of the Pyramid Texts, see V. A. Tobin, "Divine Conflict in the Pyramid Texts", p. 104.

225 See Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride: Edited with an Introduction, Translation and Commentary by J. Gwyn Griffiths*, Cambridge: University of Wales Press, 1970, xvii + 648 p.

the hand of his brother Seth is followed by a birth of his son Horus, who goes on to defeat his murderous uncle, vindicating his father and allowing him to be reborn, justified. The latter part that will be discussed here deals with the struggle of Horus against Seth, who wishes to destroy the young god and usurp the throne of Egypt. The initial episodes deal with the childhood years of Horus, protected by Isis against the manifold dangers of disorder sent by Seth against the helpless boy. These are only scarcely alluded to in the Pyramid Texts and Thoth plays no role in these – the corpus is not concerned with the health of a child, which is the usual context for the story of Horus' youth, but with the well being of the father Osiris, which comes into the foreground only later in the myth, as Horus grows strong enough to challenge Seth. A clash of the two gods results in their mutual maiming, Seth losing his testicles, Horus losing his Eye, and a sexual encounter also takes place, causing Seth to be impregnated by Horus' semen and giving birth to Thoth. He then proceeds to restore Horus' Eye to a healthy state and helps Horus defeat Seth, bringing him down to uplift the impaired Osiris. At the same time, the conflict also concludes with the reconciliation of the two fighters, restoring peace between the two principles of existence: order and disorder. The ascension of Horus to his rightful place also fixes Seth in a place befitting him, reforging a productive relationship between the two.<sup>226</sup>

The story will be divided into three parts for the purposes of this thesis, which will be found to reflect the two main shifts in Thoth's character: (1) the Murder of Osiris and the Maiming of Horus and Seth, (2) the birth of Thoth, and (3) the restoration of Osiris and the reconciliation of Horus and Seth.

## **2. "HE WHO IS BARRED FROM HIS TESTICLES": THOTH THE ENEMY**

### **2.1 THOTH AND SETH IN THE PYRAMID TEXTS**

One of the more remarkable features of Thoth in the Pyramid texts, certainly one that is quite frequently commented upon, is the close relationship between Seth and Thoth. The strange trait of Seth's interchangeability with Thoth was already shown on the case of PT615, the only attestation of the motif in the personal texts. The theme is comparably more present in sacerdotal texts, being expressed in a wider variety of situations.

Generally speaking, all the major gods of the Pyramid Texts enter into a variety of relations with the chaos-god. These all reflect the basic two modes of his behavior that are present in the Horus-Seth myth and which are present in Pyramid Texts also: enmity and cooperation. The former is certainly the more familiar one, Seth being a malignant power threatening the cosmos in general and Horus and Seth in particular. Osiris is slain by Seth who wishes to usurp the throne of Egypt and who then proceeds to contest the claim of Horus, the son and rightful heir, who has to face his mighty uncle in a number of trials of both wits and brawn. The *Contendings of Horus and Seth*, however, end in a reconciliation, and this peaceful cooperation of the two gods is just an important part of the tale as is their lengthy animosity. This aspect is present in the Pyramid Texts as well,

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226 Te Velde, H., *Seth, God of Confusion*, p. 63–73.

most generally in the juxtaposition of Horus and Seth. In a number of texts the god is in a neutral position, being involved in neither harmful nor helpful activity towards the King,<sup>227</sup> mostly by being a member of a greater group of deities.<sup>228</sup> Consequently, deities in general approach Seth as either a threat or a collaborator and this is also the case with Thoth. Unlike other gods, however, Thoth does not only oppose Seth in his malignant role, but seems also to aid him in harming the Pyramid Texts' protagonists. The nature of this complex relationship of Thoth with Seth and hostile forces in general will be the focus of the following chapters.

## 2.2 THE MURDER OF OSIRIS: THOTH AS A COHORT OF SETH

The death of the King and thus also of Osiris is, of course, the focal point of the Pyramid Texts. Death itself was on a certain level considered a hostile act, a violation of one's right to live that had to be rectified by ritual/legal action.<sup>229</sup> The Osiris myth of the Pyramid texts says very little of the matter directly, as it was likely considered improper and possibly dangerous to grant the death any kind of reality, and it is possibly to infer the exact nature of Osiris' demise only from the minor references to it.

Osiris is “put to his side” a position of weariness and death,<sup>230</sup> he is chopped to pieces, requiring reassembly.<sup>231</sup> The perpetrator is Seth, whose guilt is accentuated far more than the unsavory state of Osiris. He has wronged his brother, struck him and left him alone on the river-bank.

Seth is generally alone in his mischief, the gods unified in opposition of his evil. Sometimes, however, is Thoth joined with him as a fellow malefactor. Thus in PT218 the following statement is found:

“This is what Seth and Thoth have done, your brothers who do not weep for you.”<sup>232</sup>

The speech is directed to the King and while it is not clear what the “this” refers to,

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227 PT 25, PT 34, PT 35, PT 36, PT 210, PT 215, PT 224, PT 225, PT 247, PT 306, PT 308, PT 322, PT 327, PT 386, PT 390, PT 413, PT 419, PT 424, PT 443, PT 447, PT 450, PT 459, PT 470, PT 474, PT 475, PT 480, PT 483, PT 572, PT 577, PT 580, PT 581, PT 591, PT 600, PT 601, PT 610, PT 612, PT 665A, PT 665B, PT 666, PT 674, PT 681, PT 690, PT 718, PT 734.

228 Phillip John Turner, *Seth: A Misrepresented God in the Ancient Egyptian Pantheon?*, Oxford: Information Press, 2013, p. 18.

229 Jan Assmann, *Death and Salvation in Ancient Egypt*, tr. by David Lorton, Ithaca – London: Cornell University Press, 2005, p. 64–73, 282. (Ger. original *Tod und Jenseits im alten Ägypten*, München: Beck, 2001.)

230 Jan Zandee, *Death as an Enemy*, Leiden: Brill, 1960, p. 82.

231 Jan Assmann, *Death and Salvation in Ancient Egypt*, p. 23–38.

232 §163d: *m=k jr.t.n stš hnꜥ dhw.tj sn.wj=k j.hm.w rm tw.*

as the section speaks of the King's superiority to Osiris, but it is obvious that the two gods are hostile to him in the context of his demise, refusing to lament his death. This reference is very important for the understanding of Thoth's role in the initial episodes of myth. It marks him as a negative being, grouped with Seth to set them together apart as the enemies of the King. This attitude presents itself again in PT 219. The first part of the considerably lengthy spell is a series of almost identical speeches to a number of deities, including the members of the Ennead of Heliopolis, Horus and Thoth. The first, addressed to Atum, is representative of the rest:

"Atum, this Osiris here is your son, whom you made revive and live: he will live and this NN will live, he will not die and this NN will not die., he will not perish and this NN will not perish; he will not be taken away and this NN will not be taken away: he will be taken away should this NN will be taken away."<sup>233</sup>

The logic of the spell is quite clear. By first confirming the outcome of the Osiris myth, i.e. the resurrection of the god and then tying the fate of the King to that of Osiris, the King hopes to secure his own resurrection. Apart from the variation in names of deities addressed and the kind of familial relationship they have with Osiris, the individual appeals are identical, save for those of Seth and Thoth. Both the addresses to these differ in their opening sentences with the two gods being set apart as negative characters:

"Seth/Thoth, this Osiris here is your brother, who was made to revive and live that he might catch you: he will live and NN will live, etc."<sup>234</sup>

Except for this initial part the sections in question are the same as the others. The spells give no particulars as to why the two gods deserve to be caught, but they are clearly set against the others, who took part in the resurrection of Osiris. Obviously it was an undertaking that the whole divine world participated in, as the speeches to the two Enneads – the little one and the great one – seem to indicate,<sup>235</sup> except for Thoth and Seth. It should be inferred that they somehow work against the rebirth of Osiris, their crime almost inevitably being the killing of the god. Thoth himself is never explicitly identified as a slayer of Osiris, Seth being the one accused in most the cases,<sup>236</sup> but the context of Thoth's grouping with Seth here points to his cooperation in the murder.

Of course, the scant evidence leaves a lot to be desired. Nevertheless, while the exact nature of the act the two gods have taken part in is uncertain, it is relatively clear that they both in some way wronged Osiris, which in this context has to be related to his death.

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233 §167a-d: *tm z3=k pw p-nn jsjrt dj.n=k sdb=f 'nh=f 'nh=f 'nh NN pn nj mt=f nj mt NN pn nj sk=f nj sk NN pn nj nhp=f nj nhp NN pn nhp=f nhp NN pn.*

234 §173a-b: *stš sn=k pw p-nn jsjrt dj.j sdb=f 'nh=f zz=f tw 'nh=f 'nh=f NN pn;* §175a-b: *dhw.tj sn=k pw p-nn jsjrt dj.j sdb=f 'nh=f zz=f tw 'nh=f 'nh=f NN pn.*

235 L. Troy, "The Ennead: The Collective as Goddess", p. 58.

236 J. Assmann, *Death and Salvation in Ancient Egypt*, p. 64.

### 2.3 THE MAIMING: THOTH AS SETH

Apart from the classification of Thoth as a negative deity that opposes the resurrection of Osiris, PT 219 also provided a piece of information about Thoth. At §175a, Osiris is said to be Thoth's brother, a claim that is contrary to the usual arrangement of the heliopolitan family of gods. As it will be shown later in the chapter, it would be more correct to classify Thoth as Osiris' grandson, although the unusual nature of Thoth's parentage makes the whole matter quite complicated. Osiris forms the fourth generation of heliopolitan gods together with his three siblings: Isis, Nephthys and Seth. To consider Thoth a brother of Osiris would mean setting him on the level of these gods and possibly also identifying him with one of them. Seth himself is a brother of Osiris in PT219, marking further the extent of the overlap of Seth and Thoth. While this may seem to read too much out of the simple sentence, there is a case to support this idea.

PT 534 is a remarkable spell, composed of a series of threats to various deities that include throwing insults against the gods and goddesses, often pointing out their less flattering attributes.<sup>237</sup> The individual parts are almost identical except for the names and insults and the final address to the deity in question, urging it to leave to a place characteristic for it. All open with either "Let X not come in that bad coming his" or "Should X try to come in that bad coming his/hers." Some of these are quite humorous, Isis being called "She of the putrid smell" (*wsh.t-hwz.t*).<sup>238</sup> Thoth is addressed in the following section:

"Should Thoth come in that bad coming of his, don't open your arms to him, but let there be said to him his identity of You Have No Mother, (and say): "Go, you who have been barred from your testicles! Go to Pe, to Thoth-town!"<sup>239</sup>

Two interesting points are presented here. The first, Thoth's lack of mother, will be discussed later, but the latter gives support for the interpretation of PT 219 above. Thoth is said to be have been hurt in the testicles, these being punished or repelled (*hsf*). This is curious enough, as there is no other reference to Thoth's testes anywhere in the Pyramid Texts and even outside them the motif is hard to find. The epithet of §1271 would seem more proper to Seth, who is in PT 534 addressed only with the *hapax sš*, translated by

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237 For a commentary on the spell, see Etienne Droiton, "Sarcasmes contre les adorateurs d'Horus", in *Mélanges syriens offerts à M. R. Dussaud*, Paris, 1939, p. 495–506; R. Weill, "L'incantation anti-ossirienne insérée dans la composition du chapitre Pyramides 1264–1279, *BIFAO* 46 (1947): 159–197. A newer commentary along with a reflection of the positioning of the spell is presented in Jürgen Osing, "Zu Spruch 534 der Pyramidentexte", in Cathérine Berger, Gisèle Clerc, and Nicolas Grimal (eds.), *Hommages à Jean Leclant 1*, Cairo: Institut français d'archéologie orientale, p. 279–284.

238 Allen renders the name curiously enough as "Putrid Crotch" (J. P. Allen, *Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, p. 167).

239 §1271a-1271c: *jw jw.t dhw.tj m jw.t=f dw.t m wn=k s.wj=k n=f kw j.dd.t n=f rn=f n nj mjw.t=k j.zj hsf jr jnt.wj=k j.zj jr p jr hr-dhw.tj*.

Allen as "Cut Off One" and by TLA as "Hare" with Wörterbuch only considering it to be a "Beiwort des Seth". The epithet fits Seth perfectly, his loss of testicles being a prominent motif of the Pyramid Texts, and this marks a very specific relationship between him and Thoth.<sup>240</sup> By being attributed with this particular epithet, Thoth is essentially identified with Seth, a god for whom castration and other violations of the testes are typical. Looking back to PT 219, Thoth being brother to Osiris would seem to coincide with the situation presented by PT 534.

#### 2.4 THE HOSTILITY OF THOTH

The negative aspect is always found in conjunction with Seth. More correctly, it is through Seth that the disorderly nature of Thoth presents itself. His complicity in the murder is implied through grouping with Seth, their connection further accentuated by Thoth's assumption of Seth's attributes.<sup>241</sup> As far as the murder of Osiris and the maiming of Seth are concerned, it seems that Thoth is inseparable from Seth, almost being an extension of the chaos-god.

This thesis is obviously ambitious in regard to the scarcity and simplicity of the sources that have been presented above. The evidence, however, seems to point its way and it will be shown that Thoth's role in the following episodes of the Horus myth contrasts sharply with that of the one spoken of here, the close relationship with Seth undergoing a complete inversion which materializes in Thoth's physical birth from Seth. From the position of Seth's unusual fatherhood may the idea of an initial identity of the two gods seem more sensible.

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240 Cf. Georg Meurer, *Die Feinde des Königs in den Pyramidentexten*, Freiburg: Universitätsverlag Freiburg, 2002, p. 62.

241 The motherlessness of Thoth at §1271b may refer to the deviant birth of Seth, who having come to the world by ripping through the side of Nut was not really considered to have been born, in consequence being motherless. Cf. H. Te Velde, *Seth: God of Confusion*, p. 27–28. The sentence nevertheless probably refers to the idea that Thoth is born of two fathers, Horus and Seth. See below at 3.1.

### **3. THE (RE)BIRTH OF THOTH**

#### **3.1 LATER SOURCES**

The turning point in the myth of Horus is the confrontation of the two gods. Their showdown takes on a number of different forms: there are contests of the brawn and the brain and sexual ones too, the elder god trying to establish his dominance over the younger, desiring to show that his might is stronger than Horus' right. The whole quarrel is also treated as a legal issue, a tribunal of the gods working side by side with the literal battles, the appeals and counter-appeals mirroring the gods' literal strikes.<sup>242</sup>

The *Contendings of Horus and Seth* comprise of many of these episodes, many of which are clearly hoping to amuse the reader, as when Seth mistakenly builds a ship of stone for a boating contest, mistaking a "ship for stone" with "ship of stone".<sup>243</sup> The stories of the fights of Horus and Seth are many and illustrate the great number of local traditions along with the Egyptians' ability to envision a plethora of different stories as all being a variant of the same fundamental reality, all representing the idea of conflict within the created universe.<sup>244</sup>

It is during this phase in the myth that the birth of Thoth takes place. While there is a number of particular differences among the many attestations of this mythical episode, a shared idea of the god's conception and birth can be found. It has already been said that the struggle of the two gods took on the form of a sexual contest, the connotations of eroticism permeating the whole of their lengthy conflict.<sup>245</sup> The two fighters are male, of course, but to the Egyptian mind the divine power of generation was not confined to the heterosexual union, the deities of Egypt far surpassing human beings with their fertility,

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242 See H. Te Velde, *Seth: God of Confusion*, p. 27–62.

243 *Chester Beatty I*, 13,7–9. See also H. Goedicke, "Seth as a Fool", *JEA* 47 (1961): 154.

244 For the story in its historical context of the succession crisis of Ramesses V, see Ursula Verhoeven, "Ein historischer Sitz in Leben für die Erzählung von Horus und Seth des Papyrus Chester Beatty I", in Mechtild Schade-Busch (ed.), *Wege öffnen: Festschrift für Rolf Gundach zum 65. Geburtstag*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz 1996, p. 361–363.

245 For a commentary on the sexual episode, placed into context of Middle Kingdom literary references of homosexual acts and the historical sources and a critique of the term "homosexual" as a descriptor, see R. B. Parkinson, "'Homosexual' Desire and Middle Kingdom Literature", p. 57–76. For an analysis of the system of gender underlying the episode with regard to legal rights in court and a general commentary on the conversational dynamics of the *Contendings*, see Deborah Sweeney, "Gender and Conversational Tactics in the Contendings of Horus and Seth", *JEA* 88 (2002): 141–162. The role of homosexuality and subjugation in the construction of Egyptian idea of masculinity is discussed in Richard Bruce Parkinson, "Boasting about Hardness: Constructions of Middle Kingdom Masculinity", in Carolyn Graves-Brown (ed.), *Sex and Gender in Ancient Egypt: 'Don your Wig for a Joyful Hour'*, Swansea: Classical Press of Wales, 2008, p. 115–142.



and their encounter results in an issue. Be it through trick or physical domination, Horus manages to impregnate Seth. Thoth is then born out of Seth's forehead, the two gods his two fathers.<sup>246</sup> The *Contendings of Horus and Seth* address the issue in a different way and describe an episode in the two god's struggle where a celestial disc is born out of the forehead of Seth, who has been tricked to ingest Horus's semen, thereby being impregnated by him. The disc is then snatched from the head of Seth by Thoth, who puts it on his head as the Moon.<sup>247</sup>

### 3.2 "THE CUTTER WHO CAME FROM SETH"

The Pyramid Texts only scarcely refer to this episode.<sup>248</sup> While there are numerous mentions of the struggles of Horus and Seth, the birth itself is almost exclusively referred to by a specific phrase "cutter who came from Seth" (*mds pr m stš*), which serves as an epithet of Thoth.<sup>249</sup> It is attested three times in the corpus: PT 665A,<sup>250</sup> PT 665D<sup>251</sup> and PT 674<sup>252</sup> contain it.

The phrase itself is not easily translated.<sup>253</sup> The term *mds* is the point of difficulty as it can be taken to mean "cutter, violent one", but also "knife", the knife being the typical "cutter", while Allen translates the divine title as "knife-bearer". With the term *mds* meaning both "knife" and "violent one", Allen's translation expresses the two levels of meaning of the word, but fails to impress the connotation of violence associated with the knife. Thoth does not carry the knife for the purpose of carrying as a priest carrying a sacred object: he carries it to use it to violent ends, as will be shown later. A wordplay on the meanings of *mds* "to be sharp; to be perceptive" is possibly present as well, with Thoth

246 For a summary of sources for this tradition, see Hermann Kees, "Zu den ägyptischen Mondsagen", in *ZÄS* 60 (1935): 1–15. See also J. G. Griffiths, *The Conflict of Horus and Seth*, p. 4; M. Stadler, *Weiser und Wesir*, p. 147–151.

247 *Chester Beatty I*, 12,12–13,2. This curious rendition likely attempts to reconcile the myth of Thoth's birth with traditions of his involvement in the *Contendings* prior to the episode of his birth. See also Frédéric Servajean, "Lune ou soleil d'or? Un épisode des Aventures d'Horus et de Seth (P. Chester Beatty I (11,1–13,1))", *RdÉ* 55 (2004): 125–148.

248 For a summary of the PT situation, see R. B. Parkinson, "Homosexual desire", p. 65.

249 The Pyramid Texts contain a number of references of different traditions of the birth of Thoth, notably PT 539, which speaks of a "great seat, that made Horus and begat Thoth", but none of these is by far as prominent or influential in the corpus as the one presented in this chapter. For a summary of the tradition of Thoth's birth by a female deity, see M. Stadler, *Weiser und Wesir*, p. 152–156.

250 §1906b.

251 §1927c.

252 §1999c.

253 The possible translations are presented in M. Stadler, *Weiser und Wesir*, p. 148.

being a god later known for the soundness of his senses and wit.<sup>254</sup>

In the three spells the epithet is used solely as such. Thoth does not seem to be invoked in a particular capacity that would allow for the title to be explained through context and the epithet is neither explained nor otherwise made a topic by any of the spells in question.<sup>255</sup> It is only by comparing the title with the later mentions of Thoth's peculiar conception and birth that it can be made sense of. Much like the disc emerging from the head of Seth in the *Contendings*,<sup>256</sup> so too in Pyramid Texts was Thoth imagined to come out of Seth.

The sexual episode itself is not explicitly mentioned by the Pyramid Texts, being only alluded to, no specifics being revealed in the corpus. The "cutter" phrase, however, points directly to the tradition of Thoth's birth from Seth,<sup>257</sup> which is further supported by PT 135, where the Eye of Horus is said to be "from Seth's forehead".<sup>258</sup>

It is interesting to note that the initial episodes of Thoth's activity in the Osirian myth seem to predate his birth, the slaying of Osiris taking place significantly earlier than the struggle of Horus and Seth. This apparent paradox may be solved if the provisional hypothesis of the previous chapter is applied. The hostility of Thoth always finds him tied to Seth and it is only when he is born from Seth's body that he undergoes a complete reversal, becoming a force of order. He literally is an integral part of Seth and comes to being by being separated from him through sexual act, the male-to-male homosexual one having strong violent connotation to the Egyptian. Thoth is thus presented by the Pyramid Texts as a force at first inseparable from disorder, a potential one that is only through interaction with order manifested on its own, transformed into a force of good.

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254 Patrick Boylan, *The Hermes of Egypt: A Study of Some Aspects of Theological Thought in Ancient Egypt*, London: Milford, 1922, p. 75.

255 The "knife" of Thoth has been compared to the sickle of the Moon. See G. Meurer, *Die Feinde des Königs in den Pyramidentexten*, p. 63.

256 *Chester Beatty I*, 12, 12.

257 H. Te Velde, *Seth: God of Confusion*, p. 39.

258 §84a: *jsjrt NN m jr.t hr.w jm.t h3.t stš*. Cf. PT 134.

## 4. THOTH THE RECTIFIER

### 4.1 THE UNRAVELING OF THE MYTH

The birth of the Moon-god marks the beginning of the myth's last chapters. The lengthy and indecisive conflict gives way to the story's manifold resolutions, the individual strands of the myth's narrative coming to their ends. This chapter will present the role of Thoth in these final stages of the Horus-Osirian myth, namely in the return of the Eye of Horus to Horus, the justification of Osiris and the reconciliation of Horus and Seth. While these aspects of the story will often appear as unrelated and distinct, they all represent valid conclusions of the myth which inevitably leads to a universe rebalanced after the dramatic death of Osiris that upset not only the god's personal fortunes, but the order of the cosmos as a whole.<sup>259</sup>

### 4.2 THOTH AND THE EYE OF HORUS

With the birth of Thoth the story turns against Seth.<sup>260</sup> In course of their conflict both gods are severely wounded, Horus suffering of his Eye, Seth of his testicles. These represent their divine essences, the testes an epitome of the virile strength of Seth, the Eye the sign of Horus' royal power,<sup>261</sup> inexorably tied to the solar disc, the great eye in the sky. The story does not, of course, end with both the fighters maimed. The coming of the newly manifested Thoth marks a break in the myth: as he heals the Eye of Horus and returns it to its rightful owner, the power of Horus is restored and Seth can finally be defeated.<sup>262</sup>

Such is the case in the later tradition, but the Pyramid Texts do attribute the healing of the Eye to Thoth only scarcely. A good example of this is the already discussed personal text PT 524, where it is said to the Eye of Horus: "NN is Thoth, who tended you, (eye); NN is not Seth, who took it."<sup>263</sup> In other cases it is Horus himself, who cleanses his eye,<sup>264</sup> "filling" it, the harm done to the eye envisioned as an emptying of a sort, the eye losing a vital part. The healing of the Eye by Thoth is probably referred to in PT 62, an offering spell: "Osiris NN, accept Horus's eye, in which Thoth saw the water."<sup>265</sup><sup>266</sup> The harming of

259 For Thoth as a righter, see M. Stadler, *Weiser und Wesir*, p. 440–454.

260 V. A. Tobin, "Divine Conflict in the Pyramid Texts", p. 98.

261 §154a.

262 P. Boylan, *Thoth: The Hermes of Egypt*, p. 32-33. V. A. Tobin, "Divine Conflict in the Pyramid Texts", p. 102.

263 §1233b: *NN pw dhw.tj nd tn nj NN js pw stš jt s.*

264 §1233a.

265 Allen translates "the waters in which Thoth saw", but the meaning is quite clearly that water has been seen by Thoth in the Eye, not that the Eye is water seen by Thoth.

266 §43b: *jsjrt NN m-n-k jr.t hr.w mzt.n dhw.tj mw jm.w=s.*

the Eye caused it to flow with tears, these being marks of both pain and sexual assault.<sup>267</sup> The "water" (*mw*) thus probably refers to the tears that would be seen by the Eye's healer.

Generally speaking, Thoth plays a remarkably minor role in the healing of the Eye or its retrieval to Horus. The Pyramid Texts do not seem to contain the concept of an intermediary character necessary to return the Eye of Horus to his rightful owner, but rather express an idea the situation can be resolved without outside help.<sup>268</sup> Sometimes Horus takes the Eye back himself,<sup>269</sup> or the Eye comes back on its own.<sup>270</sup> The retrieval itself is not always a violent act: in PT 97 Horus asks the Eye of Seth with a firm word.<sup>271</sup> It seems that for the purposes of the Pyramid Text's beneficiary, who was to a significant extent still identified with the living king Horus, it was considered more prudent to downplay the weakness of Horus and emphasize his ability to retake possession of his vital essence.

#### 4.3 THOTH THE AVENGER

One of the central motifs of the Pyramid Texts is, of course, the justification of the deceased Osiris. In many of the spells Osiris represents the deceased King, who by identifying with the god of resurrection wishes to achieve life after death.<sup>272</sup> To attain such a state death itself has to be indicted and forced to make amends for the crime it committed against the deceased. The evil power, traditionally equated with the vile Seth, is overcome and eliminated and thus the deceased regains his integrity.<sup>273</sup>

The prosecution of death generally falls to Horus and Thoth in Egyptian mortuary texts,<sup>274</sup> a pattern also well attested in the Pyramid Texts. While elsewhere, however, the motif of this prosecution as a legal issue is the prominent aspect of the matter, the Pyramid Texts refer to the judgment of Seth only scarcely and indirectly without Thoth ever being described as present at such a trial, despite his later reputation as a divine litigator.<sup>275</sup> Rather than fighting the enemies of Osiris with the words he is also renowned for,<sup>276</sup> Thoth

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267 H. Te Velde, *Seth: The God of Confusion*, p. 50.

268 Cf. *CT III* 343b, where the *wedjat*-eye is returned to Horus by Thoth. See also PT 658, where Thoth fetches Horus for the King. It is possible that Horus is to be brought as a holder of the Eye, which the King desires for himself.

269 §95b; §1242a–c.

270 §977c–d; §1243a–c.

271 §65b.

272 J. Assmann, *Death and Salvation in Ancient Egypt*, p. 142.

273 *Ibid.*, p. 67.

274 M. Stadler, *Weiser und Wesir*, p. 177.

275 M. Stadler, "Thoth", p. 6–7.

276 §1253a. See also Youri Volkhine, "La dieu Thot et la parole", in *RHR* 221 (2004), p.

of the Pyramid Texts pursues the evildoers of the world and brings them to justice in the most literal manner by delivering them to Osiris to be killed themselves.<sup>277</sup> This bellicose aspect of Thoth's is a part of a wider complex of ideas associated with Thoth as, generally speaking, the most frequent motif of Thoth in the Pyramid Texts is an exhortation to bring something.<sup>278</sup> This is sometimes encountered in a visibly ritual context, as in PT82, where Thoth is to fetch an offering table, which is identified with the Eye of Horus, a usual metaphor for an offering.<sup>279</sup> In the majority of cases, however, a fetching of a different kind is expected of the god: in eight of the eleven "fetching" spells is Thoth asked to bring one's enemies for him.<sup>280</sup>

The motif is present in a basic form in PT 24:<sup>281</sup> "Thoth, go acquire the opponent of this NN for Osiris."<sup>282</sup> The spell exhibits the typical traits of this category of spells, which apart from the order to fetch mention the beneficiary thereof, most usually the King, with possible middle-men being mentioned also. In PT 23 Thoth acts on behalf of the King in service of Osiris:<sup>283</sup>

"Osiris, acquire for yourself all those who hate NN and anyone who speaks bad of his name. Thoth, go, acquire him for Osiris: get the one who speaks bad of Unis' name; put him in your hand."<sup>284</sup>

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131–156.

277 Spiess considers the bellicose aspect of Thoth to be the most important one of Old Kingdom Thoth (H. Spiess, *Der Aufstieg eines Gottes*, p. 54, 138.) For a summary of the helpful role in bringing enemies to Horus, see V. A. Tobin, "Divine Conflict in the Pyramid Texts", p. 104.

278 PT 23, PT 24, PT 71F–H, PT 82, PT 327, PT 356, PT 367, PT 542, PT 543, PT 658A–B, PT 670.

279 §58: *dhw.tj jn sw hr-s | h3.t pr n=f hr jr.t hr.w | h3.t*. See Samuel Mercer, *Horus: Royal God of Egypt*, p. 153.

280 PT 23, PT 42, PT 327, PT 356, PT 367, PT 542, PT 543, PT 670.

281 An even simpler exhort *dhw.tj jn sw* is present in PT71B at 2a, 3a and 6a, where it is translated by Allen as "Thoth, fetch him", but the context is obviously ritual, the *sw* probably to be translated as "it".

282 §16e-f: *dhw.tj z jt hft(.j) n NN pn n jsjrt*.

283 For a detailed study of the apotropaic function of PT 23 and its relation to other invocations against an inimical being, see Jan Assmann, "Spruch 23 der Pyramidentexte und die Ächtung der Feinde Pharaos", in Cathérine Berger, Gisèle Clerc, Nicolas Grimal (eds.), *Hommages à Jean Leclant 1*, Cairo: Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 1994, p. 44–59.

284 §16a-c: *jsjrt jt n-k msdd.w NN nb.w m dw m rn=f dw dhw.tj jt sw n jsjrt jn mdw m rn n NN dw dj n-k sw m dr.t-k*.

In PT 356,<sup>285</sup> PT 372, PT 542<sup>286</sup> it is Horus who orders the fetching:

"Ho, Osiris NN! Horus has come seeking you. He has made Thoth drive back Seth's followers for you, he has gotten them for you, and has turned away the desire of Seth."<sup>287</sup>

"Ho, Osiris NN! Awake! Horus has had Thoth get your opponent for you, and he has put you on his back so that he will not thwart you."<sup>288</sup>

"It is Horus (who speaks). He has come that he might take account of his father, Osiris NN. ( ... ) Thoth, have no mercy on all who hate my father. Thoth, go and get my father when he journeys, the one who is dangerous to him."<sup>289</sup>

PT 670 again has Horus responsible for the King's acquisition of his enemies, with Thoth performing the fetching itself:

"your son Horus shall lead you, having given you your opponents, Thoth having gotten them for you."<sup>290</sup>

In PT 685A Horus and Thoth again cooperate in defeating the King's enemies:

"Horus has put your enemies under you, transported and guided. Thoth has allotted them to you, dragged them to you, felled [them] for [you]."<sup>291</sup>

In the case of PT 367 the spell speaks to Thoth directly, without explicitly mentioning a deity who would be making the request, meaning it is the priest himself speaking to the god. The spell is remarkable in the way it distributes the responsibilities among the gods mentioned:

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285 For an extensive study for the the transmission of PT 356 and its relationship to other members of the D group of Pyramid Texts (A typology in Hartwig Altenmüller, *Die Texte zum Begräbnisritual in den Pyramiden des Alten Reiches*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1972, p. 49-50), see Jochem Kahl, *Steh auf, gib Horus deine Hand: Die Überlieferungsgeschichte von Ältenmüllers Pyramidentext–Spruchfolge D*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1996, ix + 82.

286 The interpretation of the latter part of PT542 as a speech by Horus is accepted here, but is admittedly tentative.

287 §575a–576a: *h3 jsjrt NN jw.n hr.w zhn=f tw rdj.n=f sht n=k dhw.tj jm.jw ht stš jn.n=f n=k sn jwn.w shm n=f jn n stš.*

288 §651a-c: *h3 jsjrt NN j.rs jr=k rdj.n hr.w jn.t n=k dhw.tj hft.j.k d.n=f kw hr s3=f jm=f h3.w kw.*

289 §1135a: *hr.w pw jw.n=f jp=f jt=f jsjrt NN; §1336a-b: dhw.tj m h3tb=k j.msḏ.w nb jt dhw.tj j.zj m3=k jn.w jt n<sup>c</sup>=f sw n=f.*

290 §1979b-c: *j.sšm tw z3=k hr.w rdj.n=f n=k ntr.w hft.jw=k jn.n n=k sn dhw.tj.*

291 §1857a-d: *d.n n=k hr.w hft.w=k hr=k ḏ3.wjj m3<sup>c</sup>.wjj jp.n n=k sn dhw.tj st3=f n=k sn shr.n=f n=k sn hr-k.*

"Ho, Osiris Teti! Geb has fetched Horus for you, that he might tend you. He has fetched you the gods' hearts. that you might not groan, that you might not moan. Horus has given you his eye, that you might acquire the crown in it at the fore of the gods. Horus has gathered your limbs for you and joined you, and nothing of you can be disturbed. Thoth has seized your opponent for you, beheaded along with his retinue, and there was none of them whom he spared."<sup>292</sup>

Thoth here is not only capable of making captives of the King's enemies, but is a menacing power, slaughtering his prisoners without mercy in a manner particularly horrifying to the Egyptians.

Another possible instance of the motif, PT 543 likely comprises of a direct address to Thoth and a speech by the god, although the original says nothing of the latter speaker's identity. The similarity to the previously cited spells, however, seems to validate Allen's reading:

"Go to Osiris, (Thoth): he is NN. Osiris NN, I have gotten for you the one who killed you, (says Thoth): don't let him escape from you. Osiris NN, I have gotten for you the one who killed you, with a knife used against him."<sup>293</sup> Osiris NN, I have gotten for you the one who killed you, cut up in three pieces."<sup>294</sup>

Again, the defeat of the hostile force is followed by its physical mutilation, which is likely supposed to deny the malefactor continued existence, but which may also refer to the cutting of the sacrificial victim, whose limb took a key part in the *Mundöffnungsritual*.<sup>295</sup> Nowhere in these spells is Seth explicitly mentioned as the enemy, with only PT 356 speaking of "Seth's followers" (*jm.jw ht stš*) and "the desire of Seth" (*jb n stš*), but it would be hard to argue that the hostile forces opposing Osiris the King are representations of anything else than the tumultuous power of Seth.<sup>296</sup> Thoth is here the tool of justice, the one who at the behest of other interested deities brings to an end the cycle of unlawful violence that caused the deceased King to need the Pyramid Texts in the first place. Even if

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292 §634a–635d: *h3 jsjrt NN jn.n n-k gbb h.w j.nd=f tw jn.n=f n-k jb.w ntr.w jm=k g3w jm=k šw rdj.n n-k hr.w jr.t=f jt=k wrt.t jm=s hnt.j ntr.w jcb.n n-k hr.w c.wt=k dmd.n=f tw nj hn.n=t jm=k ndr.n n-k dhw.tj hft.j=k hsk hn<sup>c</sup> jm.jw ht=f nj h3tb.n=f jm=f.*

293 An identical sentence is present in PT 545.

294 §1377a-d: *j.šm n jsjrt NN pw jsjrt NN jn.n=(j) n-k sm3 kw m pr=f m<sup>c</sup>=k jsjrt NN jn.n=(j) n-k sm3 kw jr nm=f jsjrt NN pn jn.n=(j) n-k sm3 kw š<sup>c</sup> m zp 3.*

295 For the ritual and the symbolism of the Opening of the Mouth, see David Lorton, "The Theology of Cult Statues", in Michael B. Dick (ed.), *Born in Heaven, Made on Earth: The Making of the Cult Image in the Ancient Near East*, 1999, Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, p. 123–210. On the role of Seth in particular in the rite, see H. Te Velde, *Seth: God of Confusion*, p. 86–88. For the cutting of the leg as a return of the Eye of Horus, see T. Sherkova, "The Birth of the Eye of Horus", p. 1063.

296 J. G. Griffiths, *Conflict of Horus and Seth*, p. 19. Cf. §580b.

the name of the foe is not given by the texts, it is clear that it is in the end the very same maleficent force that also exists in Seth and manifests in his evil deeds.

The hostile beings are, however, not only felled by the avenging god, but they are also made to serve Osiris, their defeat fueling the resurrection of the deceased. As it has been seen in PT 372, Osiris is placed on the back of his defeated foe, which may of course denote subjugation,<sup>297</sup> but may also imply that the malefactor is to carry the deceased.<sup>298</sup> The remark of Te Velde is particularly interesting here. The author maintains that Osiris and Seth are complementary powers of the duality of life and death: Osiris the death from which life stems, Seth the life that produces death.<sup>299</sup> In killing Osiris, Seth not only condemns himself to death, making his act essentially a suicide, but also allows Osiris to be reborn into new life, stimulating his generative power and inevitably also giving impetus to the mythical cycle that results in the establishment of the royal order in Egypt.<sup>300</sup> While it would be too ambitious to see this developed idea present in the scant testimony of the spells shown in this chapter, the theory of Te Velde's provides an illuminating background to the relationship the violent force of death plays in the whole drama of life and resurrection.

#### 4.4 THOTH AND THE RESTORATION OF THE DECEASED

To the Egyptians the body was a sum of its parts, united by the life-giving workings of the heart that apart from maintaining the circulation of vital fluids also housed the mental life of the individual.<sup>301</sup> To die was to have these parts separated, losing the bodily integrity essential to meaningful existence. If one wished to come back to life, it was necessary to reassemble his dismembered being.<sup>302</sup>

In the Pyramid Texts the concern for the wholeness of the King's body is of foremost importance and Thoth makes appearance in a few of spells that serve this goal. Three in particular have Thoth work to reestablish the integrity of the royal person. In PT 17 the dominant concern is decapitation, the King's body requiring the head to be set on it. The spell is very laconic in its form:

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297 Cf. PT 600, where the gods are placed underneath the King by Thoth. As it was seen in PT 534, all the gods and goddesses could be seen as potential danger to the King and might thus need to be subjugated to him if it was deemed necessary.

298 P. J. Turner, *Seth: A Misrepresented God*, p. 18. See also H. Te Velde, *Seth: God of Confusion*, p. 97; Jean S. F. Garnot, "A Hymn to Osiris in the Pyramid Texts", *JNES* 8 (1949), p. 99–103.

299 H. Te Velde, *Seth: God of Confusion*, p. 95.

300 *Ibid.*, p. 95–98. For the sacrifice as an act of mourning, see Dia' Abou-Ghazi, "Bewailing the King in the Pyramid Texts", *BIFAO* 66 (1968): 163.

301 J. Assmann, *Death and Salvation in Ancient Egypt*, p. 26–31.

302 J. Assmann, "Death and Initiation in the Funerary Religion of Ancient Egypt", p.136–137.



"Thoth, set his head on him. A VASE OF WATER."<sup>303</sup>

PT 17 is a spell of the Offering list and it is thus certain that the pronouns "his", "him" refer to the the King. The fear of not possessing a head in the afterlife was a serious concern for the Egyptians, for whom the loss of head was considered akin to complete bodily destruction and was thought to result in a "second death", denying the decapitated person life after death.<sup>304</sup> This fate has been usually reserved to rebels and criminals, whose total annihilation could thus be ritually assured, although it is attested only as a symbolic act.<sup>305</sup> It was seen above that Thoth was a deity who does possess both the skills and the ferocity to deal out such gruesome punishment, decapitating a number of foes in PT 367<sup>306</sup> and dismembering another in PT 543.<sup>307</sup> While violent nature isn't a trait usually attributed to Thoth in Egyptian religion, this strange ferocity seems to coincide with many of the motifs that have been described until now. Thoth has been seen warding away evil creatures and his cooperation with the brutish Seth earned him the disdain of the gods in a few cases. It seems that here the ambivalent nature of Thoth is evoked, him being a creature born of chaos and thus with power of great violence at his disposal. The purpose of these spells is then to invoke this power for the purposes of the King and cosmic order. The ability to protect from the horrors of dismemberment stems from the ability to unleash them, an ability proper to a god one of whose name is "Cutter".<sup>308</sup>

The threat of lost body-parts is countered by Thoth in PT 448, where this reassembly is stated to entail an end of trouble for the unfortunate deceased:

"Thoth, gather NN, that he might live and what is against him might end. Thoth, place Horus's eye for him."<sup>309</sup>

To gather<sup>310</sup> the King means to give him life in a way clearly akin to that of the

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303 §10d: *ḏḥw.tj d n=f tp=f jr=f mw ds.*

304 Nicholas S. Picardo, " 'Semantic Homicide' and the So-called Reserve Heads: The Theme of Decapitation in Egyptian Funerary Religion and Some Implications for the Old Kingdom", in *JARCE* 43 (2007): 222. See also J. Zandee, *Death as an Enemy*, p. 147–158.

305 *Ibid*, p. 223.

306 §635d.

307 §1377d.

308 See above, 3.2.

309 §830a-b: *ḏḥw.tj j<sup>c</sup>b j NN <sup>c</sup>nh. =f j. tm jr. t=f ḏḥw.tj d n=f jr. t hr. w.*

310 The "gathering" might refer to the funerary practice of dismembering the deceased and subsequently rejoining his parts, which might be contemporary with some of the older Pyramid Texts. While it is possible that the spells in question speak of this older type of corpse preparation and not the typical mummification of the later Old Kingdom, the role of Thoth as the one facilitating the vivifying rite remains, the two different symbolic systems providing an essentially identical structural position for Thoth. See J.

funerary offering, which the Eye of Horus here represents,<sup>311</sup> although this could also be a reference to the Eye's function in the Opening of the Mouth ceremony,<sup>312</sup> the funerary rite of embalming being understood as providing the physical reassembly of the deceased body.

<sup>313</sup>

In PT 368 the two fears of decapitation and dismemberment are coupled as Thoth is again asked to "gather" the King:

"Geb has become content for you ( ... ) he has ( ... ) given you your head, and had Thoth gather you, so that was against you might end."<sup>314</sup>

It is of note that both this spell PT 448 contain the phrase "that what is against you/him might end", indicating an importance of the motif. Clearly the reassembly of the body is as important as the later texts go to significant lengths to show.<sup>315</sup>

The three spells mentioned all refer to Thoth's active participation in the process of the King's revivification with particular regard to its ritual aspect, the mummification and the offering ritual, which PT 468 has Thoth present to the King.<sup>316</sup> The same idea is presented by a sacerdotal spell that speaks of Thoth "akhifying" the deceased (i. e. turning him into a state of blessed life after death), PT 437:

"You shall emerge at Anubis's voice and he shall akhify you as Thoth, that you may part the gods and set the borders of the (sky's) arcs ( ... ) by the virtue of this akhification that Anubis has commanded."<sup>317</sup>

PT 477 expresses the same using different words, speaking of Osiris' raising in the company of the gods:

"Horus has come, Thoth has appeared, that they might raise Osiris to his side and make him stand up in the Dual Ennead."<sup>318</sup>

PT 610 seems to attribute the act of akhifying as well, although the relevant section

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Taylor, *Death and the Afterlife in Ancient Egypt*, p. 48.

311 S. Mercer, *Horus: The Royal God of Egypt*, p. 153. T. Sherkova, "The Birth of the Eye of Horus", p. 1061.

312 §39; §63; §92. Cf. S. Mercer, *Horus: The Royal God of Egypt*, p. 154.

313 J. Assmann, *Death and Salvation in Ancient Egypt*, p. 31.

314 §639a-b: *ḥtp n=k gbb j.mr.n=f ṯw ḥw.n=f ṯw rdj.n=f n=k tp=k rdj.n=f j<sup>c</sup>b ṯw ḏḥw.tj j.tm jr.t=k.*

315 E.g. CT 390, a spell of "Not taking a man's head from him" (CT V, 60–64).

316 §905a: "Ho, NN! I am Thoth. A king-given offering: ( ... ) that have come from Horus."

317 §796c–797b: *pr=k ḥr ḥr.w jnp.w sḏḥ=f ṯw m ḏḥw.tj wp=k ntr.w tḏḥ=k pḏ.wt jmj.wt ḥm.wj m sḏḥ=k pn wḏ.n jnp.w.*

318 §956b–c: *ḥr.w ḥ<sup>c</sup> ḏḥw.tj ṯz=sn jsjrt ḥr gs=f dj=sn ḥ<sup>c</sup>=f m ḥnt psḏ.tj.*

is too damaged to make a certain translation. In this spell Thoth is again paired with Anubis, which seems to indicate a ritual subtext to the akhifying as is the case with the spells concerned with bodily reassembly. More importantly, however, both the motifs of reassembly and akhification place Thoth between the deceased and his new life. As in the case of the ferryman spells, a problem is presented, be it an explicit one (loss of bodily integrity) or an implicit one ("what is against you"). Thoth then proceeds to intervene in this troublesome situation, removing the obstacles in the King's path to the renewed existence that he desires. This role of Thoth's in the deceased's transition is confirmed by PT 665D:

"The sky's door has been opened to you, the Cool Water's door has been pulled open to you, that you may emerge from it as Parter ( ... )Thoth shall strike away obstruction for you by means of what he will do for you."<sup>319</sup>

The state of death is a passage, the funerary ritual a rite of passage.<sup>320</sup> Where the personal texts, however, created a comprehensive image of a celestial expanse that needed to be traversed in a way akin to travel across the world of the living, the sacerdotal texts articulated the drama of an individual's demise as a mythical event that takes part not in a world of canals, ships and river-banks, but in the world of the fallen Osiris and murderous Seth. The basic idea is the same: the King is in an undesirable state and needs to pass away from it to a new, better one, but not having enough power to do so enlists the help of the gods so that each of them might help him in a way befitting the nature of the deity, Thoth included. The rendition, however, differs. Thoth is once again a transition figure, but the shift in general symbolism of passage brings about a shift in Thoth as well. He becomes a violent figure, opposing the dangers of the liminal state of death, having at his disposal the strength of death itself, the power of his father Seth. In some spells this savage aspect is more subdued, Thoth merely gathering the scattered parts of the deceased, but this too has been shown to stem from his martial aspect of the Cutter. As in the case of the ferryman spells, Thoth ensures the transition of the dead King, his dual nature of a son of death and servant of life allowing him to help others traverse the otherwise insurmountable chasm between the two. This ambivalence of Thoth with regard to the cosmic order will prove important as well in the plot-line of the Horus-Osirian myth discussed in the next chapter, where he pacifies the two fighters Horus and Seth, bringing to an end the archetype of discord in the world.

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319 §1927c: *wn n=k ʿ3.wj p.t jzn n=k ʿ3.wj kbḥ.w pr=k jm=sn m wpj.w ( ... ) ḥn=k dḥw.tj sdb m jr.t=f n=k.*

320 H. Willems, *Coffin of Heqata*, p. 380–381.

#### 4.5 THE PACIFICATION OF HORUS AND SETH

As the drama of Osiris comes to its glorious resolution in his resurrection and the assuming of kingship of the afterlife, so too Horus finally prevails over his demonic uncle and takes rightful possession of the throne of Egypt. The victory of Horus, however, is not merely a triumph over a foe defeated, but marks a cessation of hostilities that have torn the universe apart for untold years. The murder of Osiris created a rift within the created cosmos between the two great forces of nature that Horus and Seth represent. Although Seth is a vile being, he is nevertheless a legitimate member of the family of gods, just as the wild regions of the world are an inseparable part of the living universe.<sup>321</sup> The dichotomy that has been established to provide a proving ground for the young princeling to become a full-fledged ruler needs to be dismantled. The two gods must come to peace and the circle of violence must come to a close.<sup>322</sup>

The negative aspect of the two gods' struggle is visualized by an image of their mutilation, the injured testes of Seth and Eye of Horus the testament of the wounded state of the universe. To heal these wounds is to restore the proper relationship of Horus and Seth, as the Opening of the Mouth ceremony states:

"The distress that causes confusion has been driven away, and all the the gods are in harmony. I have given Horus his eye, placed the *wḏzt*-eye in the correct position. I have given Seth his testicles, so that the two lords are content through the work of my hands."<sup>323</sup>

A similarly toned statement is given by an offering-rite of a hieratic papyrus:

"come to these offerings . . . I know the sky, I know the earth, I know Horus, I know Seth. Horus is appeased with his eyes, Seth is appeased with his testicles. I am Thoth, who reconciles the gods, who makes the offerings in their correct form."<sup>324</sup>

The reason these very suitable texts are presented here is, sadly, because the role of Thoth in the pacification of Horus and Seth is only scarcely attested in the Pyramid Texts.

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321 It has also been argued that Seth needs to be pacified as he is still danger to Osiris when he is restored by receiving the Eye (J. G. Griffiths, *Conflict of Horus and Seth*, p. 4. Cf. §60b; §92c; §999c).

322 H. Te Velde, *Seth: God of Confusion*, p. 64–65. V. A. Tobin, "Divine Conflict in the Pyramid Texts", p. 101.

323 Eberhard Otto, *Das ägyptische Mundöffnungsritual I*, Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz, 1960, scene 71t–x. Translation by J. G. Griffiths.

324 *Papyrus Beatty IX*, rt. I, 3–5; cf. A. H. Gardiner, *Hieratic Papyri in the British Museum*, Text volume, London: British Museum, 1935, p. 83.

325 For Thoth as a mediator between Horus and Seth, see F. Servajean, "Lune ou soleil d'or?", p. 140.

This seems to be the case despite the fact that the healing of the two gods itself is quite often spoken of in the corpus, a good example being PT 215, where the King says to Atum:

"See me, as you have seen the forms of the progeny who know their spells, the Imperishable Stars,<sup>326</sup> and see (in me) the two in the palace – that is, Horus and Seth. May you spit on Horus's face for him and remove the injury against him;<sup>327</sup> may you catch Seth's testicles for him and remove his hurt."<sup>328</sup>

Atum is exhorted to heal the wounds of Horus and Seth. If that is done, the King would appear in the palace as both Horus and Seth, the desired unity of cosmic powers coming to be in the person of the King.<sup>329</sup> Thoth himself is attested as a pacifier of deities only once in the corpus, in PT 577. Moreover, this section does not seem to refer to the conflict of Horus and Seth, but rather speaks of the whole world of the gods:

"Content is Atum, the god's father; content are Shu and Tefnut; content are Geb and Nut; content are Osiris and [Isis]; content are Seth and Neith; content are all the gods in the sky; content are all the gods in the earth and in the water; content are all the southern and northern gods; content are all the gods of the countryside; content are all the gods of towns – at this great and important speech that has come from the mouth of Thoth for Osiris."<sup>330</sup>

This spell, which is also the single Pyramid Text attestation of the eloquence and verbal power that defines Thoth of later times,<sup>331</sup> presents Thoth as a pacifying power, a trait which is considered typical of the god, but PT 577 nevertheless finds no parallel in the corpus in this regard. It seems that compared to his martial role, the peaceful reconciliatory aspect of the god was considered of little importance or use to the King's purposes, the deceased probably preferring to have his enemies subjugated or dead rather than alive, even though as allies. In any case, the peaceful role of Thoth in the Horus-Osirian myth can be attested in the Pyramid Texts only with a significant measure of imagination, marking another deviation of the Old Kingdom Thoth from that of later

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326 Cf. Raymond O. Faulkner, "The King and the Star-Religion in the Pyramid Texts", *JNES* 25 (1966): 157.

327 Spitting was considered an effective means of magical healing. See Robert Ritner, *The Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice*, Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1995, p. 79.

328 §141b–142b: *m3.n=k jr.w ms.wt jt.w=sn j.rh.w r=sn j.hm.w-sk m3=k jm.jw h hr.w pw hn stš psg=k hr n hr.w n=f.j.dr=k nkn jr=f.j.h=k hr.wj n stš j.dr=k jjj=f.*

329 H. Te Velde, *Seth: God of Confusion*, p. 68–69.

330 §1521a–1523a: *htp tm jt ntr.w htp šw hn tfn.t htp gbb hn nw.t htp jsjrt h[n js.t] htp stš hn n.t htp ntr.w nb jm.jw p.t htp ntr.w nb jm.jw t3 jm.jw mw htp ntr.w nb rs.w mh.tjw htp ntr.w nb jmn.tjw j3b.tjw htp ntr.w nb sp3.tjw htp ntr.w nb njw.tjw hr mdw pn wr 3.j pr m r n dhw.tj n jsjrt.*

331 Youri Volokhine, "La dieu Thot et la parole", p. 131–156.

epochs of Egyptian history.

#### 4.6 OSIRIS ENTHRONED: THE KING AS THOTH IN SACERDOTAL TEXTS

It was seen that in the personal category, the identification of the King with Thoth was used to grant the beneficiary special qualities that were deemed useful to his ascension. The same motif is present in the sacerdotal texts, but while it takes place in three spells, as was the case with the personal texts, the prominence of the motif in them is considerably smaller. As in the case of the personal texts, however, the identification is employed to emphasize the specific character of the divine power that is Thoth as it is used for the direct benefit of the deceased. Here it will be shown that Thoth is a force closely associated to the royal power that guarantees the King reign over the after-world as Osiris.

The first spell to be considered here, PT 665A, identifies the King with Thoth as Osiris:

"Ho, NN! You are Thoth in his White Palace, in your identity that is with Osiris. Your baton is in your hand as him of the mud,<sup>332</sup> and you shall number those of the night and use your arm to (direct) the Imperishable Stars."<sup>333</sup>

The spell establishes the King as the ruler of the dead as indicates both the identification with Osiris and the assuming reign over the Imperishable stars, who were believed to be forms of the blessed dead.<sup>334</sup> The wish of the king to become Osiris is both frequent and understandable in the context of the Pyramid Texts, but the appearance of Thoth here is perplexing. The White Palace (*ḥ-hd*) refers to the painted shrine in which the cult image of the deity was housed.<sup>335</sup> This served as the god's resting place, but also as his tomb, the cult image a divine corpse that was roused from death by the morning ritual.<sup>336</sup> In this deathly state would Thoth indeed be in his "identity that is with Osiris", but the choice for this particular god is still relatively unclear. It is possible that to rule over the stars it was considered proper to assume the mantle of the Moon-god, the Moon having the connotations of reign over the night as the Sun had over day.

The idea of Thoth as a ruler of the dead or rather as a force that is somehow associated with the royal power of Osiris is reiterated by the two other spells that identify the King with Thoth, PT 611 and PT 665C:

"Here is the controlling power at the fore of the akhs: this father Osiris NN is the mace of the great ones at your fore, akhs. Father Osiris [NN is the great] controlling power [at you fore, akhs. Father Osiris] NN [is] Thoth among you,

332 I. e. Osiris, the fertile black mud a reference to Osiris life-giving force.

333 §1899b–1900a: *h3 NN pw twt dhw.tj jm.j ḥ-hd=f m rn=k hr jsjrt ḥb3=k m ḥ-k k3h.w js tnw=k h3.w m jt=k ḥ-k jr hm.w-sk.*

334 R. O. Faulkner, "The King and the Star-Religion in the Pyramid Texts", p. 157.

335 J. P. Allen, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, p. 443.

336 D. Lorton, "The Theology of Cult Statues", p. 123–210.

gods."<sup>337</sup>

"Be alive, be alive in this your identity that is with the gods, apparent as Parter, as the Ram at the fore of the living, as the controlling one at the fore of the akhs. This NN is Thoth: gather yourselves, you gods in the White Palace. Such is this NN, who is with you Osiris!"<sup>338</sup>

The key phrase here is "the controlling one at the fore of the akhs." It marks Thoth as a ruler, merging his nature with that of Osiris, king of the dead. The "gods" of these spells probably refer to some denizens of the after-world, the White Palace phrase at §1913c setting the beings in question to the realm of the dead.<sup>339</sup>

It has been shown that Thoth could be seen as an aspect of the Eye of Horus, himself being the returning Eye of the god in its identity of the Moon, the other facet of the healed Eye the solar disc.<sup>340</sup> Thoth is also seen in many of the spells the one giving the Eye to Osiris, an act considered analogous to the reviving of the corpse of Osiris.<sup>341</sup> In a sense, Thoth giving the Eye to Osiris is the Eye coming to him, all the service of Thoth to the deceased god representing the reinvigorating force of the Eye that is granted to him. The spells that have been presented in this chapter do refer to King as Osiris in his aspect of the resurrected god, the justified King in the after-life, the Osiris, who has been, amongst other things, granted by Thoth the many services described in the chapters above. It might be the case that Thoth was considered to become an aspect of the reinvigorated Osiris, the former force of chaos transformed to serve order. It was said above that a sacrifice of Seth is what grants the life to death that is Osiris. Thoth would then be this very power that is transmitted from Seth to Osiris, a vital strength guaranteeing life and dominion in the after-world.

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337 §1724c–1725c: *sh̄m nn hn.tj ʒh.jw ḥḏ wr.w pj jt jsjrt NN pn hn.tj=tn ʒh.jw sh̄m wr pj jt jsjrt NN pn hn.tj=tn ʒh.jw ḏhw.tj pj jt jsjrt NN m ʿb=tn ntr.w.*

338 §1913a–c: *hʒ NN ʿnh ʿnh ʿnh ʿnh m rn=k pw hr ntr.w ḥʿ.tj m wp.jw bʒ js hnt ʿnh.w sh̄m js hnt ʒh.jw ḏhw.tj pw NN pn jʒb tn ntr.w jm.jw ʿh-ḥḏ pw pw NN pn hrj=k jsjrt.*

339 The distinction between akhs and gods was often downplayed by the theology of the Pyramid Texts.

340 S. Mercer, *Horus: Royal God of Egypt*, p. 151. See also J. G. Griffiths, "Remarks on the mythology of the eyes of Horus", p. 183–185.

341 §830a–b.

## 5. THOTH IN GOD-GROUPS

The chapters that have passed have all but exhausted the considerable list of spells that contain the name of Thoth. Most of the sacerdotal spells have been shown to place Thoth within the Horus-Osirian mythos or the broader religion of death and afterlife the myth presents, several of the relevant Pyramid Texts, however, remain undiscussed. These spells all present Thoth as a member of a longer list of deities, who collectively aid the King's transition or supply him with necessities. This chapter is concerned with the role Thoth plays in the god-groups of these spells.

One of the more proliferate strategies of the Pyramid Texts is to provide a list of deities possessing an article or quality desired by the King, who is then attributed the ownership of all of these particular ones, establishing a close relationship with the gods through shared possessions. Thoth plays a role in two of these – PT 35 and PT 36 – the article in both cases being snTr: "cleansing" or "natron", a purifying agent:

"Your natron is Horus's natron; your natron is Seth's natron; your natron is Thoth's natron; your natron is the god's natron: your own natron is amongst them. Your mouth is the mouth of a milk-calf on the day he is born.<sup>342</sup> 5 PELLETS OF DELTA NATRON OF SHETPET.<sup>343</sup>

""Your natron is Horus's natron; your natron is Seth's natron; your natron is Thoth's natron; your natron is the god's natron; your natron is your ka's natron, your natron is your natron's natron: this your own natron is amongst your brothers, the gods. Your natron is on your mouth: you should clean all your bones and end what is against you. Osiris, I have given you Horus's eye: provide your face with it disseminated. 1 PELLET OF NATRON."<sup>344</sup>

PT 35 is the quintessential purification spell, being the oldest attestation of a formula that would be used until the fading of the Egyptian religion.<sup>345</sup> Both the spells are thus concerned with the King's purity, particularly the purity of his mouth: obviously a ritual of offering pellets of natron to the deceased' mouth, a part of the Opening of the Mouth ceremony, is envisioned.<sup>346</sup> It is also apparent that PT 36 is essentially an expanded version of PT 35, the core of four gods complex and assurance of oral purity being enhanced with two more owners of natron ("your ka" and "your natron"), the extension of

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342 The King's mouth is pure.

343 §27a–d: *snTr=k snTr hr.w snTr=k snTr stš snTr=k snTr dhw.tj snTr=k snTr nTr snTr=k ddkṯ jm.t=sn r=k r n bhz jr.t hr.w ms=f jmbd htp.t mhṯw t3 5.*

344 §28a–c: *snTr=k snTr hr.w snTr=k snTr stš snTr=k snTr dhw.tj snTr=k snTr nTr snTr=k snTr k3=k snTr=k snTr snTr=k snTr=k ddt pn jm.t sn.w=k nTr.wsnTr=k dp r=k s<sup>c</sup>b=k ks.w.k tm.wj htm=k jr.t=k jsjrt dj.n=(j) n=k jr.t hr.w htm hr=k jm=s pdpd snTr t 1.*

345 P. J. Frandsen, "Bwt in the body", p. 158.

346 Cf. PT 37–39, which are grouped with PT 35 and PT 36 in subsequence 42.



its cleansing ability to the whole of the beneficiary's being and the identification of the offering of "1 pellet of natron" with the Eye of Horus, a general metaphor for an offering.<sup>347</sup>

The grouping of the four gods of PT 35 that is found enlarged in PT 36 has already been discussed in chapter 4, where it was found that the four gods represent the four cardinal points: Horus the north, Seth the south, the "god" (Dunanwi) the east and Thoth the west. In the context of these spells can this geographical use of deities be taken to mean that the purification of the King represents the totality of the world's purification (or the entirety of its natron supply), the four cardinal points of course being the four sides of the world in general. The particular role of Thoth as a god of the western side has already been commented upon in chapter 4 and this need little reiteration: the west is a place of death and transition, opposed to east, the place of the Sun and its rebirth. As a god of the Moon and divine mediator, Thoth is proper to overseeing the western part of the world.

The two other spells of this group – PT 25 and PT 591 – present Thoth in the very same company of deities, PT 591 attributing the four gods and the King with a "malachite sporran"<sup>348</sup> and PT 25 expanding the company with Osiris and Eyes-Forward (*hnt.j-jr.tj*), the six gods giving the King company as they all "go with their ka".<sup>349</sup> The role of Thoth in these two spells is essentially the same as that in the two other ones spoken of in this chapter and the spells discussed in chapter 4 and does not require to be discussed further.

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347 S. Mercer, *Horus: Royal God of Egypt*, p. 153.

348 A kilt-purse. As the term *šzm.t* may mean both "malachite" and "a kind of belt", the translation of Allen aims to represent both these layers of meaning.

349 A metaphor of ascending to the next life.

## THE CONCLUSION: THOTH IN THE PYRAMID TEXTS

The author of this thesis has set a two-fold goal for himself at the onset of this work. First, the sources for the nature of Thoth were to be sought throughout the Pyramid Texts and systematized to create a general idea of how the various aspects of the god's multifaceted character find themselves together in the corpus. At the same time, the division of the relevant spells into personal and sacerdotal according to the typology of Hays posed a question about the extent of this division's validity. Hays has shown that a number of motifs is specific to each of the two categories, marking the constituent spells as distinct not only in form but also in content, but his analysis was relatively superficial, the motifs coined by him based mostly on repetition of phrases or simple images. Compared to these, the gods and goddesses of Egypt are infinitely more complex symbols, possessing a number of various facets and partaking in a multitude of activities. Most importantly, the gods' character, their personality, or maybe most accurately their essence is normally hidden from sight of the one studying them, who is only presented by the often diverging manifestations. If it could be shown that in this implicit nature of Thoth a distinction could be found that corresponded with the division into personal and sacerdotal spells, it might prove Hays' already extremely insightful division as significantly more important, the two categories marking not only differences in the superficial traits of the spells, but delineating two distinct spheres within the very symbolic system that underlies the Pyramid Texts as a whole.

Up till now this thesis came to a number of particular conclusions, each chapter presenting Thoth in a slightly different context. The Wing of Thoth, arguably the most complex of the personal motifs, was shown to be a condensed symbol of Thoth's capacity of a figure of transition. The after-world described by the spells was a place like the world of the living, an expanse of space that was to be traversed. Here Thoth in the form of his Wing embodied a principle of movement and transition that often served as secondary to other, more concrete transition motifs, himself representing a more abstract concept of a spatial mediator.

The spells relating Thoth with the Moon again presented him as a figure of transition, being contrasted with the other Moon-spells that emphasized the Moon as a symbol of purification and rebirth and not as a symbol of movement, as is the case in the lunar spells of Thoth. Here the context provided was the greater cosmology of the Egyptian world, one dealing not in rivers and marshes, but with celestial bodies. Again, however, the character of Thoth as a facilitator of transition remained.

The three spells of identification dealt with in chapter three all called upon most of the traits and associations of Thoth that can be found in the Pyramid Texts, each of the complex spells deserving a scholarly work of its own. Nevertheless, each in its unique way called for the King to become Thoth in pursuit of a single purpose: the King's ascension. To become Thoth was to become transition itself and thus overcome the liminal state of death.

Thoth's role as a god of the west was found to be related to this as he formed with Horus a duo representing the east and the west, their partnership creating a bridge between the land of dead and that of the living, also calling forth the symbolism of Sun and Moon, whose role in the idea of transition was already shown.

Although the spells of the personal category often differed significantly from each other and the individual motifs presented quite distinct images of the world beyond, all of them shared the central idea of a physical territory that extended before the deceased and had to be traversed – in passing through this strange world into heaven, he also passed to renewed life. In the personal texts *space* was the symbolic world of choice.

Passing to sacerdotal texts, the image of Thoth shifts immediately in a significant way. Here he is a *dramatis persona* of the myth of Osiris and Horus, and the role attributed to him by the corpus is a most unusual role. First he is presented as a cohort of the murderer Seth in his crimes against the good Osiris, whose misfortunes mirrored those of all the kings who passed away, and is treated as a being as vile as the despicable Seth. As a consequence of the chaos-god's battle with Horus, the champion of cosmic order, Thoth would come to be born from the head of Seth, a child born of two fathers. This strange birth would herald a shift in fealty for Thoth, who would become a force responsible for remedying of Osiris' sad state, renewing his body and crushing those who opposed him.

This development of Thoth in the sacerdotal texts is most remarkable, managing to express the very same role of mediator in a way that is totally different from that of the personal texts. Instead of being placed into a heavenly three-dimensional space, Thoth is made part of a cosmic drama, the transition not being from one place to another, but from the realm of chaos into that of order. Initially an aspect of the force of disorder personified by Seth the clash with the order of Horus turns Thoth into an ambiguous being that partakes of the dynamic energy of chaos, but serves the cause of order. With the power of death at his disposal, Thoth can help the King overcome the various manifestations of his poor state by avenging him upon his enemies and repairing his shattered being, all of these metaphor for the reality of death. The drama of death comes to an end as its cause is turned against itself and tamed to serve rebirth, a paradox of life springing forth from death.

At the beginning of this thesis the distinction of personal and sacerdotal was a practical one only, serving to provide a formal structure to the study. Now, at its end, however, it is obvious that the categories of Hays found a matching reality in the character of Thoth. While he is always presented as a mediator, bridging the otherwise uncrossable gap between the elements of the world, the two groups express this role in completely different ways: in the personal texts his function is expressed in term of literal transition, his world a physical space, while in the sacerdotal the power of mediation stems from an interplay of order and disorder, the whole of the sacerdotal corpus presenting him as a being of two worlds within a drama of these two worlds' struggle.

Beyond this division, however, the function of Thoth in regard to the deceased King is united. He is a mediator, by his very nature standing in between the fundamental facts of reality. He is a traveler, he is the disorder within order, a principle of movement where the

other gods are principles of stability. The character of Thoth is in this way one of the many tools through which the Pyramid Texts, using mythical language of metaphor and ritual references, overcome death and create a convincing impression of the inevitability of the royal person's resurrection. In the words of a classic, magic comes where the mundane arts of man have no power. Faced with the insurmountable exaction of death, the Egyptians turned it into a source of life, the Pyramid Texts and its various gods, Thoth included, pieces in the mosaic of a religion of death made into life.

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