

STATE AND RELIGION IN THE NEW KINGDOM

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O. Preliminary remarks

With regard to ancient Egypt, 'state' and 'religion' are anachronistic concepts. They cannot be distinguished and confronted one to another. The political system of pharaonic kingship is a kind of religion quite in the same way as Egyptian religion is a form of political organization. They are aspects or dimensions of one single, indivisible theopolitical unity. Nothing would be more inadequate with regard to ancient Egypt than the idea of a conflict between 'church' and 'state,' as has been repeatedly proposed to account for the very fundamental, even revolutionary changes to be observed during the New Kingdom, especially the Amarna Period. There is no possibility of translating these notions into Egyptian concepts.

Nevertheless, unity does not preclude tension and even conflict. In this essay I will try a different interpretation. In my opinion, the conflict is to be located, not within the theopolitical unity, but between different conceptions of this unity. These conflicting conceptions or world-views should be reconstructed as 5-dimensional, including the religious, the cosmic, the political, the social and the anthropological dimension. They imply a theology, cosmology (or 'natural philosophy' in the sense of J. Allen), politology, sociology and anthropology. Changes in any of these aspects or dimensions affect the whole conception of reality, precisely because there is no clear-cut institutional and conceptual differentiation.

In the course of the 18th Dynasty, we observe a growing tension between three different conceptions, leading eventually to the manifest and violent conflict of the Amarna revolution. The first I will call the 'classical conception,' inherited from the Middle Kingdom and in large part dating back to the Old Kingdom. The second is represented by the 'Amarna conception,' which opposed the classical conception with so much violence and persecution. The third is known under the inadequate label of Personal Piety, and it is the main purpose of this paper to find a more adequate location and interpretation of this movement within the religious, intellectual and institutional history of ancient Egypt.¹ The dissection of these three conflicting paradigms within the whole of Egyptian history in the New Kingdom may appear

1 This study is an investigation into what might be called the 'political theology' of Ancient Egypt, taking up a line of research started by the late Jacob Taubes in a series of conferences (see Taubes 1983, 1984, 1987). Important in this respect is also the notion of 'political religion', introduced by Voegelin 1938, and, of course, Schmitt 1922, who reinvented the term of 'Political Theology' (after Spinoza and Varro). I am indebted to Jacob Taubes and especially to Aleida Assmann who first pointed out to me the relationship between 'negative anthropology' and political authoritarianism. The study is not based on specific research but rather a draft of what I think to be a possible perspective of historical reconstruction which needs of course to be worked out in greater detail. It profited very much of the stimulating atmosphere at Yale and my warmest thanks are due to W. Kelly Simpson for having provided this context with so much care and devotion.

artificial or over-precise. It might even be argued that in view of their notorious 'multiplicity of approaches' the ancient Egyptians were quite unable to experience conflict and cognitive dissonance. A descriptionist view of Ancient Egyptian history will tend to include all these seemingly contradictory phenomena in its colourful picture of a bygone reality. But the possibility of everything at any time excludes meaning and consequently understanding. Meaning presupposes negation. The interpretative approach to culture therefore attempts to find out the relevant negations. It might sometimes go too far or in the wrong direction, but, as Francis Bacon has it, "*citius emergit veritas ex errore quam ex confusione*".

1. The classical Conception: the theo-politology of maintenance²

1.1 The Text

As far as the 'classical conception' is concerned, we are in a privileged position, having at our disposal a text which can duly be regarded as fundamental in its exposition of the central concepts. The text has been known since 1970³, but its relevance to royal ideology does not seem to have been recognized.⁴ It is not a recitation but a treatise dealing with the general conditions of the solar cult and the role of the king as a priest of the sun god. It contains 44 verses and is divided into three stanzas. The first stanza of 10 verses describes the rising of the sun in the style of Egyptian cosmographical literature⁵, the second stanza specifies in 20 verses the knowledge of the king, who by his initiation into the arcana of the solar circuit is enabled and legitimized to accompany the cosmic process with cultic action and recitation.⁶ The third stanza deals with the legitimation of the king in a more general way.⁷ The king is authorized for his office not only by his knowledge but above all because he has been installed on earth by the sun god himself.

2 For general outlines of the royal ideology cf. Hornung 1982, Leclant 1980 with extensive bibliography p.65 n.15, Vernus 1986b, Assmann 1984c.

3 Assmann 1970; id., 1983b, p.48f. The text exists in 11 versions, 3 originating from royal temples of the NK.

4 The text is not mentioned in Bonhême & Fardeau 1988. In Goyon 1979 it is treated as a variant of BD chapter 15. Grimal 1986, p.50 mentions the Taharqa version and seems to regard the text as belonging to the royal propaganda of the 25th dyn.

5 Hornung 1984. The use of these 'books' for the decoration of royal tombs as a kind of exclusively royal funerary literature has to be interpreted as a secondary adaptation, *pace* Barta 1985.

6 Cf. the emphasis on 'knowledge' in the title of the Amduat, which has to be regarded as a codification of precisely the same knowledge which in our text the king is said to possess.

7 Cf. Otto 1969.

jw rdj.n R'w njswt N
tp t3 n 'nhw
r nhh hn' dt
hr wd' rmtw hr shtp ntrw
hr shpr m3't hr shtm jzft
jw dj.f htpwt n ntrw
prt-hrw n 3hw

Re has installed king N
 upon the earth of the living
 for ever and eternity
 judging men, satisfying gods,
 realizing Maat, annihilating Isfet.
 He gives offerings to the gods
 and mortuary offerings to the dead.

Verses 1-5 form one complex sentence which requires closer analysis. We are dealing with a PSO clause to which no less than six adverbial adjuncts are annexed. Complexity is created by the fact that only the first two of these adverbials relate to the verbal predicate, specifying the action of Re in its local (on the earth of the living) and temporal (for all eternity) frame. The other four adverbials relate to the object, the king, and are in fact postponed attributes:

(Action 1)	P-S-O-Adv
(Action 2)	S-P-O

Structurally, the sentence is analogous to phrases like

dj.tw n.k jrtj.k hr m33

Your eyes are given to you (your eyes which are) looking

The point is that the sentence comprises two actions, which differ widely as to tense, aspect and *Aktionsart*,⁸ and that the king plays a double role in it, being object of one

8 In my use of these terms I am following Koschmieder 1929, referring by the term *tense* to the well known triad past-present-future (with sub-divisions like plusquamperfect, present perfect etc.), by the term *aspect* to the binary opposition of perfective-imperfective (or accompl:inaccompli) and by the term *Aktionsart* to the opposition durative:punctual, which has to be supplemented by the opposition iterative (repeated action): semelfactive (singular action). All these categories are relevant in the verbal system of Middle Egyptian, even if partly neutralized (as the category of 'tense' in the *hr*+Inf.-form), but need not be developed here in greater detail. Cf. Junge 1970 and Verns 1986.

and subject of the other action resp. set of actions:

	Subject	Object	Tense	Aspect	Aktionsart
Action 1	Re	King	perfect	perfective	punctual semelfactive
Actions 2	King	<i>rmtw</i>	0	imperfective	durative
		<i>ntrw</i>			iterative
		<i>M3 't</i>			
		<i>jzft</i>			

Both actions or set of actions are transitive-causative. The god causes a set of actions, the king causes a set of states. The action of the god can be classified as initial causing or initializing. He acts once and for all. The actions of the king are incessantly going on, they are to be classified as maintaining. The maintaining actions of the king, causing a state, are subordinated to the initial action of the god, causing an activity. This is the main point of the sentence. Let us now proceed to its semantic analysis.

The God causes not only the activity of the king, but also its spatio-temporal frame. The king is acting 'on the earth of the living' and 'for ever and ever.' This implies that there can be only one state in space and time. Plurality is categorically excluded, both synchronically, as a plurality of coexistent states, and diachronically, as a succession of different empires. This view of theopolitical order precludes not only foreign policy, but also history in the sense of change, development, evolution. The temporal frame — *nhh* and *dt*: eternal repetition and eternal duration — is filled not with 'history' in the sense of a meaningful process (like, e.g., *'h'w*, the life-span of an individual) but with keeping the world going by actions which have constantly to be repeated. The basic idea is maintenance, not progress.⁹ Political action is conceived as an iterative process of maintaining a state, which is specified in four different actions:

- judging men: i.e. causing men to be provided with justice,
- satisfying gods: i.e. causing gods to be provided with worship and offerings,
- realizing Maat,
- annihilating Isfet.

The four actions of the king are arranged in pairs, and the pairs are correlated in an explicative *parallelismus membrorum*. The first pair specifies the second, the second summarizes the first. Realizing Maat and Annihilating Isfet consist in judging men and satisfying gods. Let us deal with these actions separately and first turn to the judging of men.

9 Cf., however, the ideas of 'proceeding beyond the achievements of the fathers' and of 'enlarging of the borders,' which seem to contradict this view cf. Hornung 1957 and Blumenthal 1970, 164–69 and 187f. For the idea of maintenance cf. Derchain 1961.

1.2. The implications of the classical Conception

1.2.1 *wd' rmtw*: 'negative anthropology'.

The Egyptian idea of justice implies an idea of injustice, which in its turn implies a whole anthropology. It is closely linked to the idea of inequality. "To judge men" means: to establish equality among them, in order to protect the weak against the strong. Justice, in fact, means protection. This results from another text, which deals with the same concepts in a slightly more explicit way. Book of the Dead Chapter 126 is a spell which addresses the four baboons sitting at the prow of the solar bark:

who cause Maat to ascend to the Lord of the Universe,
 who judge both the miserable and the mighty,
 who satisfy the gods with the breath of their mouth,
 who give divine offerings to the gods
 and mortuary offerings to the dead,
 who live on maat and sip on maat,
 who lie not and whose abomination is sin.

Thus, the expression *wd' rmtw* 'judging men' is to be specified and to be understood as 'judging between the miserable (*m3r*) and the powerful (*wsr*)', and not — as one would expect — between the righteous and the criminal, the good and the bad one, *zaddiq we rasha*', in terms of Biblical Hebrew. This phrase occurs again and again in several genres of Egyptian texts¹⁰ and has terminological significance. Judgment is always between the weak and the strong, the miserable and the powerful, the poor and the rich. Instead of *hn'*, 'and, together with,' the texts have more often *m-*, 'from the hand of', making quite clear, that by this judgment the poor, weak and miserable are to be rescued 'from the hand of' the strong, rich and powerful, and implying, that it is the strong one, who is the *rasha*', the criminal, and inequality as such is injustice.

One of these texts is Coffin Texts Spell 1130 which has unanimously and justly been recognized as one of the fundamental texts of Egyptian philosophy. Here, the creator speaks, and he states expressly, that, among other good deeds, he has created men equal to each other:

I made everyman equal to his fellow
 and I forbade them to do Isfet.
 But their hearts disobeyed what I had said.¹¹

10 Janssen 1946 I, 72; II Bh; Edel 1944, 42 §36; Vandier 1950, 242; Otto 1954, 95. For the king see e.g. Grimal 1986, 309 (pHarris I 78.13–79.1: "I rescue (the weak) from the hand of the strong who oppresses him").

11 CT VII 463 f — 464 c, cf. Schenkel 1983.

Isfet, as disobedience to equality, can only refer to inequality, created not by god but by the disobedient heart of men. Further on in the same text the creator asserts:

I judge the miserable 'from the hand of' the powerful.¹²

Here— and this is absolutely exceptional in an Middle Kingdom text — it is the god who charges himself with a task which, in the context of the 'classical conception' — devolves on the king.¹³ The charge of the king is to counteract this unjust state of inequality by rescuing the weak from the hand of the strong and by setting Maat in the place of Isfet, as it appears to be the role of the king as early as in the Pyramid Texts, where Unas is said to arrive in heaven after

having set Maat in the place of Isfet
in the island of flames.¹⁴

This idea of the world of the living as an island of flames where the weak are always oppressed by the strong is reminiscent of 'the law of the fishes' in the Vedic tradition: the big ones eating the smaller ones. There, as in Egypt, this pessimistic view of human nature serves as an argument for forceful government, legitimizing the kshatriya (warrior) caste.¹⁵ Another parallel is that of Thomas Hobbes, whose view of man's natural state as a *bellum omnium contra omnes* corresponds as closely as possible to the way the Egyptian texts depict a world without kingship.¹⁶ The pessimistic literature which had formerly been dated mostly to the First Intermediate Period now more and more evidently belongs to the Middle Kingdom and probably to its latter half,¹⁷ which is notorious for its strong centralistic, absolutistic and perhaps even oppressive tendencies,¹⁸ thus confirming the link between 'negative anthropology' and 'absolutism.' The idea is, that without rule, there is no order possible, implying confidence, amity, community; and without order, there is no life possible, because the weak would be slain by the strong:

12 CT VII 466 e — 467 d cf. Assmann 1983a, 178 and 279f. The same phrase occurs in pCairo 58038 (the famous Boulaq hymn) cf. Assmann 1983a, 177.

13 This exception is best explained by the literary character of the text and its function as an answer to the 'Vorwurf an Gott', cf. Otto 1950: Fecht 1972; Assmann 1983 a, 268ff.

14 Pyr 265 b, cf. Pyr 1775 b-c.

15 Incidentally, classical India provides an example for that differentiation between the religious and the political spheres, which in ancient Egypt was categorically excluded. For in India, the respective powers are divided between the Brahmin and the Kshatriya castes.

16 For Th.Hobbes see Strauss 1952, cf. also Schmitt 1922 and 1932.

17 Berlev 1987; Cruz-Urbe 1987. See also Junge 1977.

18 Helck (1986) perhaps goes too far in this interpretation. But the suppression of feudal nomarchy under Sesostriis III is an established fact. See Delia 1980 and Cruz-Urbe 1987.

when three men travel on a road, two are found;
for the greater number kills the lesser.¹⁹

Thus, the king and the state have been installed by the creator in order to protect the weak and to banish the *status naturalis* of Isfet:

He gave them 'rulers in the egg' and officials
in order to strengthen the back of the weak²⁰

The image of the 'Good Shepherd' which for us has such a pastoral and peaceful ring²¹ expresses the determination of the divine king to suppress the 'wolfish' nature of man and to fight Isfet in order to protect the weak.²² Order is not a natural quality of the

19 Admonitions 12.13-14 ed. Gardiner 1909.

20 Merikare P 135-136.

21 Mueller 1961; Blumenthal 1970. The theme of the Good Shepherd recurs in a late wisdom text, which is unfortunately still unpublished. This is what Posener and Sainte-Fare Garnot 1963, 154 communicate concerning the relevant passages on 'page C': "Toutefois le thème favori de l'auteur est l'apologie du chef. Celui-ci est nécessaire; il faut vivre dans son entourage, afin de n'être pas 'un chien qui n'a pas de maître' (page A). Au reste 'des millions de soldats sont battus, qui n'ont pas un vaillant capitaine(?)'; 'une armée est médiocre qui n'a pas avec elle son maître' (page C). Le rôle du chef est de conduire et de dominer; il lui arrive de punir, mais c'est chose naturelle: 'est-ce que les taureaux ruent, qui ont un berger qui les mate?' (page C). Mais il doit exercer aussi sa fonction avec douceur et sollicitude et l'on retrouve, dans la même page C, le thème classique du 'bon berger'. Le chef est le 'pasteur' de 'ceux que Rê a créés'. Il retribue chacun selon ses mérites et, par voie de réciprocité, le supérieur 'donne en retour de ce qu'on a fait pour lui'. C'est pourquoi la sagesse est d'adorer le maître, de lui être fidèle et même de 'donner chaque jour en plus' de ce qu'on lui doit, en sorte qu'il étende vers le donateur bienveillant 'sa main qui porte la vie'." — The revival of the social and political philosophy of the Middle Kingdom is quite evident and it is the more impressive as it is matched by the well known 'archaism' in the plastic arts of the same period, which also favors the Middle Kingdom and which should also be regarded as a revival rather than an archaism. Other passages of the text deal with the obligations of the chief: "il obéit, lui aussi, à une morale, doit être bon et juste et son propre avenir dépend de son comportement. Voici quelques citations éloquentes, tirées, elles aussi, de la page C. 'Le grand, qui vit de la vérité et qui a le mensonge en abomination, se mêlera aux (*jm3hw*)', tandis que 'celui qui multiplie les corvées est écarté des dignitaires (*smrw*) et encore 'celui qui traite indignement son nombreux peuple (?), le dieu le paiera en retour'." If this refers to the king (as it appears to be the case), the argumentation seems closer here to the Demotic Chronicle than to Middle Kingdom texts.

22 It is not difficult to read exactly this combination of pessimistic wisdom, i.e. insight into the nature of man, and resoluteness, in the expressive portraiture of kings Sesostri III and Amenemhat III.

world, it must be imposed upon it from 'above'. The pharaonic state is represented as the only means by which this can be achieved and the *natural* state of the world can be turned into a *civic* state, where the weak has a chance to survive.

1.2.2 *šhtp ntrw*: negative cosmology

The expression 'satisfying the god' occurs in BD 126 as:

"who satisfy the gods with the breath of their mouth."

The notion of satisfying refers obviously more to incantation than to action. The conception of speech as a 'breath of the mouth' is very familiar in Egyptian texts.²³ Why do the gods need to be 'satisfied' or 'appeased'? What kind of discord or dissatisfaction threatens or even reigns in the divine world which is to be dispelled by the words of the baboons and by the king? Is it conceivable that Isfet is a condition of the divine world, too, as it is one of the mundane sphere?

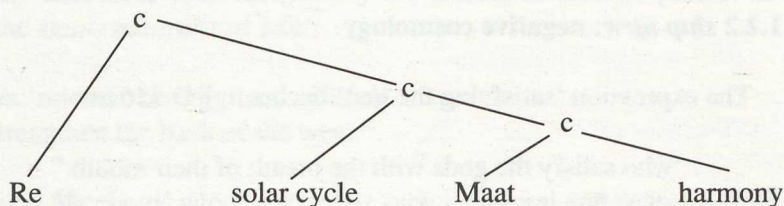
I take Apep, the dragon or serpent who threatens to swallow the celestial ocean, to be an embodiment of Isfet in the divine world. Apep incorporates the same tendency or gravitation towards disintegration on the cosmic level which the lamentations describe in the social sphere. In quite the same way as mankind is incapable of keeping order and stability by itself and needs to be ruled from above, the cosmos would fall apart if it is not constantly ruled. The Egyptians conceived of 'cosmos' not so much as a well-ordered structure in space than as a well-organized, i.e. successful and even 'triumphant' process in time. The salient point is the success of the process, the constant overcoming of a constant counterforce or gravitation towards stand-still and disintegration. The cosmic process — the solar cycle — cannot go on by itself as a *perpetuum mobile*. It needs to be maintained in the same way as social order cannot persist by itself but needs a strong government to be sustained. The point is that cosmic order needs government, too. This is the political meaning of the solar cycle: it is the exertion of government.²⁴ The significance of this conception becomes clear as soon as one realizes that the Egyptian idea of the 'solar cycle' is not just 'solar' or 'Heliopolitan theology' but embraces the Osirian, and in fact every other sphere as well and must be regarded as *the* Egyptian concept of cosmos or world-view.

The creator installed the solar cycle as an institution of cosmic government, developing Maat and dispelling Isfet, in precisely the same way as he installed the

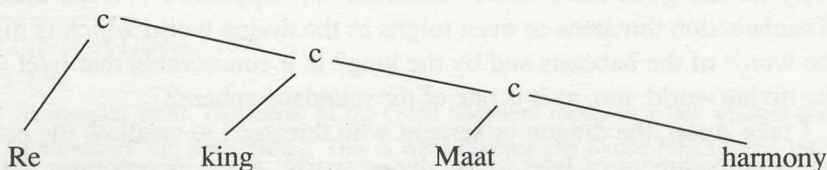
23 Vernus 1976. In the Amduat, the inhabitants of the underworld revive as they are addressed by Re and are said to 'live on his words'; (re)vivifying speech is constantly referred to as 'breath.' See Hornung 1963/70 and 1984.

24 The solar cycle, it is true, has a 'biological meaning' too. It means not only the overcoming of rebellion, but also the overcoming of death. This aspect has been analyzed e.g. by Hornung 1977. For the political symbolism cf. Assmann 1983a, 71–80.

pharaonic kingship in order to do the same on earth. One 'organization' mirrors the other. We may formalize this concept, using 'C' for 'causation'²⁵, in the following way:



Model 1: causation of cosmic order



Model 2: causation of social order

This correspondence or homology between the cosmic process — the solar cycle — and the political institution of pharaonic kingship finds its expression in the political imagery of the sun hymns and cosmographic literature²⁶, as well as in the cosmic imagery of royal inscriptions.²⁷ Consequently, expressions like *jw nsrsr* 'island of flames', *mr nh3wj* 'lake of knives', *tzt nt 'pp* 'sandbank of Apep' and the like refer both to the celestial and to the terrestrial spheres.²⁸

The sun god appears twice in model 1: in the role of 'creator' and in the role of protagonist in the solar cycle. This duplication is mythologically dealt with in the 'Book of the Heavenly Cow' where the installation of the solar cycle by the creator is

25 The concept of causality is of course quite foreign to Egyptian thought. In Egyptian conceptualizing, 'causation' is linked with magic power (*hk3*, 'magic', cf. Ritner, in this volume). Magic is conceived as a positive force to counteract the 'negativity' of the world: stand-still, disintegration, death, illness, in short: everything opposing the cosmic process.

26 Cf. Assmann 1969, 268–71; 306–309 etc.

27 Redford 1967, 3–27; Schunk 1985, 63–86.

28 Cf. Assmann 1969, 271f.; 295–298.

narrated²⁹, and it is reflected in the sun-hymns as well.³⁰ What is decisive is the complete homology of the cosmic and the political sphere. In both spheres we have the distinction between initial causation and ongoing maintenance. Let us call this principle 'indirect causation' and briefly summarize its implications:

1. Life, cosmic as well as social, is dependent on order. Order, however, cannot generate and persist by itself. It has to be imposed from outside and constantly to be defended against Isfet, a natural tendency towards chaos, disintegration and death which is innate in man, society and nature. This principle we have labelled as 'negative anthropo-/cosmology'.
2. Negative anthropology necessitates authoritative government imposing and maintaining order upon earth. Because it cannot grow from 'below' it has to be installed from 'above'.³¹
3. The solar cycle, representing the Egyptian view of the world in its cosmic dimension, has a definite meaning: it is government, imposing order, justice, coherence on a world which would otherwise collapse. As a form of action, the solar cycle is a polytheistic concept, implying a plurality of actors and opponents, it is a 'concerted' action and a 'constellative' conception. The government which the sun god exerts in his daily motion through heaven and underworld is confined to the divine sphere. It is 'anthropomorphic' in its complete homology with pharaonic rule, but not 'anthropocentric.'
4. The state is the exact imitation of this cosmic government on earth.³² But the cosmic governance cannot be reflected and life-ensuring order cannot be realized on earth otherwise than by a single ruler, son and representative of the sun-god himself. Every other form of political organization would destroy the perfect homology. The idea of 'state' is a *singulare tantum*.
5. The world does not need to be 'saved' or 'redeemed' but merely to be ruled. The salvation is not out of reach but quite to the contrary constantly realized by the combined efforts of gods and kings. There is no room for 'messianic' hope and expectation.³³ The implied anthropo-/cosmology is 'negative' only in a weak sense

29 Hornung 1982. The Egyptian concept of a 'fallen state of the world' (see Kakosy 1964) is linked with the idea, not of 'fall' but of 'separation' or splitting: the separation between heaven and earth, and between gods and men. It is this idea of a 'split world' which is at the base of the 'negative cosmology' of the ancient Egyptians.

30 In the more complex sun-hymns, verbal passages refer to the solar cycle and nominal passages to the creator, cf. Assmann 1969, 1–13.

31 In this respect, Hobbes, supporting a contract theory of socio-political order, differs from the Egyptian paradigm.

32 For the idea of the king being 'the image of god' which expresses this relationship of imitation in Egyptian concepts, cf. Ockinga 1984.

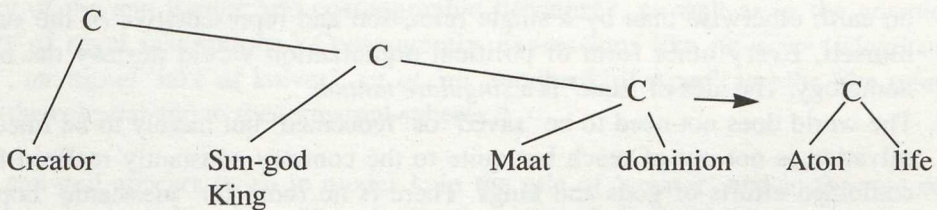
33 Cf. Assmann 1983d.

as compared with e.g. gnostic cosmology or Christian anthropology. But it is precisely this confidence in the retrievability of Maat which wanes with the end of the New Kingdom.

2. Amarna: theo-politology of life.

The ideology of the Amarna Religion contradicts the classical conceptions in the following points:

1. The solar cycle loses its political meaning. There is no mention of an enemy opposing Aten in His daily motion. The Amarna Religion is built upon a positive cosmology. It presupposes a world which, in the worlds of Vernus and Yoyotte, is "toute beauté, toute sécurité".³⁴ Such a world does not need to be 'ruled' in the strict sense of an imposition of order against an intrinsic tendency towards chaos, but merely to be kept alive.
2. In the same way as the concept of 'rule' implies plurality, the concept of 'life-giving' or 'vivification' implies singularity. The vivifying god who fills the world with light and time, is alone in the sky. This vivifying process cannot be reflected on earth by royal governance. The homology breaks down. With homology, complexity breaks down. The complexity of 'indirect causation' becomes extremely reduced, because there is no need for it in a positive cosmology:



There is no difference between primordial and continuous causation.³⁵ The world has not to be 'maintained', because there are no antagonistic forces to be constantly overcome.

³⁴ Vernus & Yoyotte 1988.

³⁵ Needless to stress the obvious fact that the very concept of causation (rendered by 'C' in the diagram) changes most fundamentally, too, by passing from the traditional to the Amarna paradigm. It loses its 'magic' implications and becomes a 'natural' principle (cf. Allen, in this volume). The apparent disregard for 'primeval creation/causation' in the Amarna texts is best explained by this merging of primeval and continuous causation (=direct causation) which, in the traditional paradigm, are separated by the 'Fall'.

3. The relation of 'anthropomorphic' homology, placing cosmic and social order in mutual reflection, gives way to a unified universe where mankind becomes the sole partner of divine action. Anthropomorphism is replaced by anthropocentrism. The whole solar cycle is performed for the sake of men: *n.sn, n jb.sn, n mrwt.sn*.³⁶
4. The concept of order is fading in the all-overpowering concept of 'life.' In the context of a positive anthropo-/cosmology there is no need for order, to be imposed onto it from above by a superior authority. On the cosmic level, the concept of Maat disappears, on the social level, it assumes the meaning of 'truth.' This point should be developed separately:
 - 4.1 The sun, by its motion and radiation, administers life to the world. It is absolutely indifferent regarding ethical problems and simply not concerned with the weak, the poor and the miserable. The whole phraseology of protection is lacking in the Amarna hymns in a most conspicuous way.
 - 4.2 The king monopolizes Maat; he bears the divine epithet 'who lives on Maat' as part of his royal nomenclature.³⁷ But by Maat he does not understand 'justice' in the classical sense of protecting the weak against the strong, but 'truth' in the sense of the orthodox interpretation of revealed knowledge.³⁸ 'Evil' now assumes the meaning of opposition to the doctrine of Akhnaten who

shows his wrath (*b3w*) against him who ignores his doctrine but his favour unto him who recognizes him.³⁹

This leads to a depoliticalization both of cosmic as well as of sociopolitical order which now assumes the character of a religion and an orthodoxy.⁴⁰

What is the role of the king in this picture of the world? Certainly not that of a prophet, as has often been stated. The notion of prophet presupposes a divine will or purpose to be revealed. Prophets are the spokesmen of God. But Aten does not speak nor does he wish anyone to speak in his stead, to interpret his plans, projects,

36 Cf Assmann 1983a, 118–23. It is this anthropocentric perspective which conveys a religious meaning to the creative action of the sun. In this respect, the Amarna religion differs from Ionian philosophy in its interpretation of nature. Cf. Allen, in this volume.

37 Anthes 1952.

38 The notion of revelation with regard to Amarna is somewhat problematical, because this truth is not revealed by speech but by insight into the speechless evidence of nature. But the claim of the king being the only one to 'know' the god and the intolerance typical of an orthodox interpretation of knowledge are dominant features of Amarna religion.

39 Sandman 1938, 86.15–16.

40 This development is particular well illustrated by the total neglect of foreign affairs during the Amarna period, see Moran 1987 (political correspondence).

decisions. There is nothing to be proclaimed, it is all there in sheer, overwhelming evidence. The king, it is true, interprets the evidence, translating radiation and motion in terms of religious meaning, answering them by cultic action and speaking to a god who expresses himself in a strictly 'heliomorphic' way. But this is not 'prophecy' in the strict sense.⁴¹

The role of the king is that of a coregent.⁴² Since the king cannot 'reflect' the divine action of creative vivification, he can only share in it. As we already know, the god does not 'rule' by establishing justice and peace, but by animating the world by his radiance and his time-generating motion. It is the *dependence* of everything existing on light and time which is interpreted as *subjection* to the Aten. It is absolute subjection excluding the possibility of rebellion. Thus, it has no proper political significance. The king associates himself to this 'rule' as a kind of junior partner, bearing the title of 'son' while the god is called 'father.' The names of both god and king are written in cartouches. The traditional unity of religion and state is even more emphasized. But it is a different conception of this unity.⁴³

The point of conflict between the Amarna and the classical conception seems to be the negative anthropo-/cosmology which has been replaced in Amarna by a positive one. But some elements in this picture, the emphasis on anthropocentric instead of anthropomorphic interpretations, the fading of the figure of Apep and the concept of a cosmic combat, are to be found outside the Amarna period and seem to be characteristic of the 18th Dynasty in general. The sharp and total rejection of the 'pessimistic' Middle Kingdom style in portraiture may possibly point in the same direction. Thus it is probable that the Amarna revolution is just the final eruption of an ongoing conflict between Middle Kingdom and 'modern' conceptions.

3. 'Personal Piety': Theology of Volition.

The same observation applies to another movement in the New Kingdom which first came to be known through a group of stelae from Deir el-Medina and was therefore interpreted as a kind of popular religion⁴⁴ or even a 'religion of the poor'.⁴⁵ But Breasted already recognized in these texts a typical expression of the Ramessid age, which he accordingly baptized 'the age of personal piety.'⁴⁶ Recent research has enlarged our view of the evidence in two different ways:

41 The silence of the god who expresses himself visually is balanced by the 'voice' of the king which plays such an important part in the inscriptions. The king is the 'speaking god', spreading truth (Maat) upon earth as the Aten spreads light and life.

42 cf. Zabkar 1954.

43 Important in this respect: Voegelin 1938.

44 Erman 1911.

45 Gunn 1916.

46 Breasted 1912, 344-370.

1. It is not restricted to certain groups of monuments, e.g. ex-voto stelae, or literary genres⁴⁷, or social groups or classes but pervades the whole of Ramessid culture, from royal to private monuments, from literature to art and religious institutions.
2. It dates in its origins back to the 18th Dynasty. The typical terminology appears in different kinds of sources as early as the times of Hatshepsut, Thutmose III and Amenophis II.⁴⁸ Its roots may even reach back into the First Intermediate Period. The movement appears as a kind of under-current in the classical periods of Middle Kingdom and early New Kingdom to break through into full dominance only after the collapse of the Amarna religion.

3.1 Fore-runners and foreshadowings

3.1.1 The First Intermediate Period and the Middle Kingdom

The central idea seems to be a new and more personal conception of deity, of gods intervening in life and history, manifesting a personal will, intention and purpose. Therefore a term like 'theology of volition, or intention' seems to me more adequate. The first instances of this conception of god occur in the First Intermediate Period and in the Middle Kingdom:

1. Ankhtify reports in his tomb at Mo'allā to have been summoned by the god Horus of Edfu to intervene in the Edfu nome.⁴⁹
2. The god Min is reported, in two famous inscriptions in the Wadi Hammamat, to have worked miracles in favour of king Mentuhotep IV.⁵⁰
3. Horemkhauf reports in his Hierakonpolis stela to have been summoned by the god Horus-Avenger-of-his-father to bring the statues of himself and his mother Isis from the residence of Ithtowe to Hierakonpolis.⁵¹

These examples have been selected at random and can certainly be multiplied by systematic research. But I do not think that they would ever amount to more than exceptions from the rule, manifestations of an undercurrent.⁵²

There are some literary texts which point in the same direction, the most famous being of course the biography of Sinuhe and the Shipwrecked Sailor. In the

47 Fecht 1965.

48 Posener 1975, 195–210; Assmann 1984, 225–232.

49 Vandier 1950, 163ff.; Schenkel 1965, 45ff.; Fecht 1967, 50ff.

50 Couyat-Montet 1912 #110 and #191; Schenkel 1965, 263f.; 267f.

51 Hayes 1947.

52 I am not in favour with the generalizing stance, taken e.g. by Griffiths 1988, who holds the idea of "divine impact on human affairs" to be a feature typical and common of all periods of Egyptian history.

Shipwrecked Sailor we encounter a god appearing in person and revealing past and future, thus a kind of revelation.⁵³ Sinuhe is driven into exile by what he identifies as 'the plan of a god', a god who intervenes in his life but who remains unidentified throughout the story.⁵⁴ All these examples are situated outside the pharaonic sphere. The literary examples locate the action in foreign regions, the historical examples do either the same (the miracles in the Wadi Hammamat) or they date from periods when pharaonic power was waning or collapsing.

In the official sphere, the idea of divine intention or volition is confined, as one might expect, to the concept of initial installation. The text which is most explicit in this respect is the Berlin leather-roll pBerlin 3029, an 18th Dynasty copy of a building inscription of Sesostris I.⁵⁵ The idea of divine purpose is very prominent:

That he created me was to do what he has done,
to implement what he has ordered to be done.
That he installed me as shepherd of this land was
because he had recognized that I would organize it for him.

r 'in order to' repeated three times; emphatic constructions; verbs like *msj* 'to bring forth, create', *wḏ* 'to order', *rdj* 'to install', *rh* 'to recognize': all this relates very strongly and explicitly to the idea of divine intention. But it remains within the frame of 'initialization,' thus of 'indirect causation.' But there are, a bit more off the center of official text production, some indications of a somewhat different theology, foreshadowing what will be common conviction in the New Kingdom:

1. The strong emphasis on the creational rather than the cosmogonical aspect of 'genesis' in some Coffin Texts, especially the theology of Shu in the Hermopolitan tradition (El Bersheh) where Shu is explicitly stated to be created 'by the heart and by the efficacy' of Atum.⁵⁶ The most important text in this respect is the 'aretalogy' of the Universal Lord in CT 1130 where the creator justifies his creation.⁵⁷
2. The strong emphasis on the anthropocentric rather than the anthropomorphic significance of the solar circuit, as exposed in the closing hymn of the Instruction for Merikare. This text, coming as close as possible to similar convictions in the later 18th Dynasty, is preserved exclusively on papyri dating from that period.⁵⁸

53 Simpson 1983, cf the bibliography in Kurth 1987.

54 Cf. Loprieno 1988, 41–59 and Griffiths 1988, 93f.

55 de Buck 1938; Goedicke 1974; Abd el Azim El Adly 1984.

56 CT I 336–338. See Assmann 1984a, 213–15; 1984b; Allen 1988.

57 Assmann 1984, 204–8; Allen 1988.

58 Merikare: cf. Assmann 1983, 168; 1984a, 201–4. Generally cf. Blumenthal 1980.

3. The tale of the miraculous birth of the first three kings of the 5th Dynasty as related in the latter part of pWestcar seems at first sight in keeping with the classical conception. But Re does not install the institution of kingship, but individual kings, thus intervening in the course of history and bringing about what is to be seen as a 'Heilswende' (salvatory turn, *metabole epi to beltion*).⁵⁹ The difference between the tale and the official dogma (as it is demonstrated e.g. in pBerlin 3029) is difficult to grasp, because it is always an individual king NN who is conceived, born and installed upon earth by god as an embodiment of the institution of kingship. But there is a nuance towards the individual aspect which will become virulent in the New Kingdom.

3.1.2 The case of Queen Hatshepsut

Queen Hatshepsut seems to have played an important role in the development of a new idea of divine intentionality. We must not forget that the text which we hold to be fundamental for the classical conception occurs also in the temple of Der el Bahari. Her inscriptions include four different allusions to a theology of volition:

1. The elective oracle which the Der al Bahari and Chapelle Rouge inscriptions represent as an extraordinary and unprecedented event;⁶⁰
2. The Punt oracle, manifesting a divine intention which is not confined to initial installation;⁶¹
3. The idea of 'divine command,' as it occurs in the Speos Artemidos inscriptions: the Hyksos ruled 'without Re' and Re reciprocally 'did not act by divine order' until her own reign.⁶²
4. The pictorial cycle of the miraculous birth which, although in keeping with the classical dogma, stresses the aspect of 'Heilswende' in the same sense as pWestcar.⁶³

Hatshepsut herself coins an epithet which expresses the new idea of divine intention in the most concise way when she addresses the god in the Chapelle Rouge inscription as 'he who plans everything existent' (*k3jw ntt nbt*):

Oh my father who plans all that exists,
what is it that you want to come about?
I shall do it according to your order!⁶⁴

59 Cf. Assmann 1982a.

60 See Römer 1987. In my present account of the development, which is more detailed than in Assmann 1984a I profit from Römer's critical remarks.

61 Urk IV 342.

62 Urk IV 290; Gardiner 1946.

63 cf. Brunner 1986 and Assmann 1982.

64 Lacau-Chevrier 1977, 99. (*k3j*) 'to plan' and (*wḏ*) 'to order' are precisely the actions by which the

Taken isolatedly, these instances do not seem very revolutionary. But in their accumulation they do mark the beginning of a new development, leading first to the Amarna revolution, which has to be seen as a reactionary opposition against this movement, and then to its full break-through in the immediate post-Amarna age.

3.2 Aspects of the new conception

3.2.1 Anthropology of will

a) The first stage belongs entirely to the Classical Conception in its Middle Kingdom form. This is the 'doctrine of the heart.'⁶⁵ In clear opposition to the Old Kingdom concept of man, where man seems to act exclusively on royal orders, where the king seems to monopolize initiative, planning and motivation and where the notion of 'heart' is conspicuously absent in the biographical inscriptions, the Middle Kingdom biographies present a concept where man is inwardly directed by his heart as the seat of character, virtue, principles, competence, motivation, intention and will. If he serves the king, it is his heart guiding him to do so. The problem of intention and responsibility is treated in the story of Sinuhe in a way that shows its vital importance in the context of the anthropological philosophy of the time.

The ideal of virtue or 'inward quality' (*nfrw*) is wisdom. This concept is to be understood as insight into the rules which ensure social and political harmony, viz. Maat. The Egyptian expression is 'silence' and 'the silent one,' denoting the sage who not only 'knows' but also subordinates himself to or 'complies with' (*hṭp hr*) Maat.⁶⁶

b) The second stage is marked by the replacement of Maat (=the will of the community) by the will of god, entailing the replacement of 'wisdom' by 'piety.'⁶⁷ The relevant expressions are '*rdj m jb*' and '*jrj hr mw*': 'to place god into one's heart' and 'to act on his water,' i.e. to act in a way which is loyal and faithful to his will. These expressions make their first appearance already in the reign of Hatshepsut and Thutmose III:

(God is) father and mother unto him who places him into his heart,
but he turns his back unto him who neglects his city.
He who is guided by him cannot fail.⁶⁸

creator, according to the Memphite Theology, created the world: by words which were 'designed' (*k3j*) by the heart and 'ordered' (*wḏ*) by the tongue.

65 For the Egyptian conception of the heart as the seat of intention see Piankoff 1930; Brunner 1988, 3–41; Assmann 1982b; 1987, 221–232.

66 For the ideal of 'silence' cf. Brunner-Traut 1984; Assmann 1983c, 195–201.

67 See Assmann 1979

68 Stela of Antef, presumably from TT 164, cf. ÄHG, Nr.75.23–24; 1983b Nr.165.

(God) gives breath to him who worships him
and success to him who acts on his water.⁶⁹

Reciprocity which is the core of Maat and the base of social harmony, is now transferred from the social sphere to the man-god-relationship. This shift from the principle of Maat to the will of god entails a general transfer of notions from the social to the religious sphere. The most important transfers concern (a) obedience and (b) confidence.

a) obedience and subordination: The wise man, who by his insight is capable of attuning himself to the principles of social order, is succeeded by the pious man who attunes and subordinates himself to the will of god. The ideal of 'silence' now refers to humiliation and obedience to god. Thus, the idea of self-subordination and integration is transferred from the individual-society-relationship to the man-god-relationship.

b) protection and confidence: the quintessence of the idea of Maat has always been the protection of the weak (to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, to ferry the shipless, to bury the heirless, to shelter the widow and the orphan etc.) Solidarity as it is established by Maat operates vertically: in the form of protection from above and confidence and 'love' from below. Precisely this vertical axis is now transferred to the man-god-relationship, putting god in the position of the protector, the 'good shepherd', and man in the position of the poor and the weak. Already in one of the early prayers of Personal Piety, dating from the time of Amenophis II we read:

I have placed you into my heart because you are strong,
[...] protector (*nḥw*),
behold: my fear (*snḏ*) is gone.⁷⁰

Several of the Ramessid texts point out that there is no protector among men but that a deity — Amun, Mut etc. — is the only protector on which a human heart can rely:

I did not seek for myself an official for a protector;
I do not associate myself with a rich man,
I do not give my portion under the strong arm of a man who was in the
house of [the king].
My lord is my protector,
I know his strength.
Protector with a strong arm, he is the only strong one.⁷¹

69 TT 11 cf. ÄHG Nr. 83.6–7; 1983b Nr.13.

70 oCairo 12.217 rto ed. Posener 1975, 206–7.

71 pAnastasi II, 9.2–10.1 ed. Gardiner 1937, 17f., Fecht 1965, 46–52; cf. ÄHG Nr.177

This transfer of confidence, from the human to the divine sphere, has very practical consequences, as is most clearly evidenced by the case of Zimut named Kiki who not only considered

to find himself a protector,
and he found Mut to be at the top of the gods,⁷²

but who consequently bequeathed all his property to her.⁷³ This is an early case of self-dedication which in later time became quite customary.⁷⁴ The position inversely correspondent to protection is weakness, poverty, misery which now become self-definitions of the pious one,⁷⁵ along with 'silence:' god is 'the protector of the silent one, the saviour of the poor'⁷⁶ or 'the lord of the silent one who comes at the voice of the poor.'⁷⁷

'Confidence in god', connected with expressions like *mḥ-jb* ('to fill the heart with somebody') and *hnn r* ('to lean against somebody') now becomes a common notion. The most typical expression of this attitude is the notion of placing oneself into the hands of god, which is a recurrent theme in the teaching of Amenemope⁷⁸ but is already very prominent in the inscriptions of the statue Berlin 6919 of Amenemope (temp. of Seti I) which begin: 'How beautiful is it to sit in the hand of Amun' and which close with the wish 'to be safe in your hand.'⁷⁹

The most innovative aspect of Ramessid anthropology is perhaps the concept of sin, of culpability with respect to god.⁸⁰ Man now becomes capable of guilt towards god. This leads to a new genre of self-thematization which is the very opposite of the traditional tomb-biography. Biographical events become 'readable' as signs of divine favour or disgrace. In either case man is elicited to erect a stela proclaiming this event of divine manifestation (*sdd b3w*⁸¹). Personal experience gains a new interest. Life is exposed to constant divine judgment. God is omniscient and will distribute his favour or disgrace in strict reciprocity to human attitude and behaviour.

72 AeHG Nr.173.11–17; the concept of the election of the goddess Mut as a personal protector recurs in the same text over and over again, cf. especially verses 42f., 62f., 66f., 102ff.

73 Vernus 1978.

74 Thompson JEA 26, 68ff.; Posener, RdE 22, 204.

75 cf. Brunner 1961 = 1988, 189–214.

76 Berlin 6910 (temp. Seti I) from TT 215 cf. Assmann STG Nr. 206.

77 Berlin 20377 cf. AeHG Nr. 148, 15f.

78 Amenemope 22.8, 23.11, 24.19f. etc. cf. Grumach 1972.

79 STG, p. 283. Cf. also the very remarkable text AeHG Nr. 186.

80 Griffiths 1988.

81 Assmann 1973; Borghouts 1982, n.163.

3.2.2 Theology of will

Many of the anthropological notions like silence, poverty and confidence are just one side of corresponding theological notions like omnipotent disposition and protection. Personal Piety corresponds to Personal Deity. The idea of god assumes the characteristics of an inner-personality and individuality: will, intention, decision, judgment. The most typical roles are the saviour of the oppressed⁸² and the judge of the poor,⁸³ both related to the idea of protection. We shall not go into details here, because this side of the deity has already become apparent from the corresponding anthropological conceptions.

Instead I will try to treat the concept of divine will, intention and intervention in a more general way. In my opinion, there is a clear opposition between the classical concept of Maat (implying indirect causation) and the concept of the will of god, implying direct causation and intervention. The classical conception with its category of 'indirect causation' confines the will of god to the pattern of reality which he has installed by his initial action. Divine will is committed to the cosmic cycle, he cannot 'will' otherwise than the eternal repetition and the identical reproduction of the pattern; he is bound to the roles or functions in which the gods are believed to be immanent and manifest in reality.⁸⁴ For the classical dogma, god's will becomes manifest, not in the exception, the miracle, the singular event, but in the pattern, in the miraculous precision of repetition. This is as much as a negation of divine will. God is not free to dispose, nor of the cosmic cycles, nor of the rules underlying social life, viz. Maat.

The theology of will requires absolute sovereignty. God has to be separated from the roles and functions of the 'pattern' he once installed. He cannot be bound to the mere maintenance of cosmic order.⁸⁵ In the new frame of a theology of will, it is not the repeated pattern, but the singular event which manifests the will of god. These events can be interpreted as manifestations of favour — in Egyptian *ḥzwt*: 'favour',

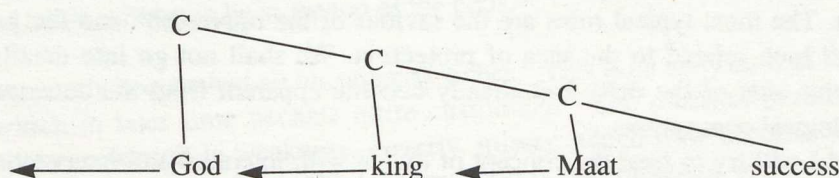
82 cf. Otto 1971; Brunner 1958 = 1988, 173–188.

83 Posener 1971.

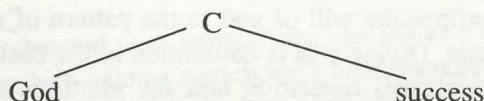
84 The function-conformity of the gods precludes intentionality and personality: this is the reason why Egyptian mythology is so poor as compared with Babylonian or Greek mythology where the gods seem much less involved in the functioning of reality. But see Dihle 1985, 9f., for similar conceptions of unintentional role-conformity in Greek philosophy.

85 This leads to the problem of transcendence as explained especially by Morenz 1964. Morenz clearly overemphasized this aspect of the Ramessid conception of god. The separation of god and his 'mundane' functions went never so far as to think of god external to the world. He remains inside but not coextensive with the world; he exceeds it, cf. Assmann 1983, 200 ff. Egypt holds an intermediate position between Greece, where the gods are fully committed to cosmic order, and Israel, where God fully transcends it. The world, in the Egyptian comprehension, is a manifestation of god, both as cosmos and as history.

'blessing'⁸⁶ — rewarding the pious one, or as manifestations of wrath — in Egyptian *b3w* 'power'⁸⁷ —, punishing the frivolous. Success and failure are now no longer seen as a consequence of Maat, i.e. of social coherence and solidarity, but of direct divine intervention. In this respect, the reduction of indirect to direct causation becomes most conspicuous and has often been observed:⁸⁸



Model 1: indirect causation



Model 2: direct causation

In the model of direct causation, god disposes of Maat as he chooses and is himself the instance of judgment and justice. He is the 'lord of justice' in a double sense: 1) in the sense of protection, related to the weak/strong opposition and the problem of inequality, and 2) in the sense of jurisdiction, related to the right/wrong opposition and the problem of sin. He is omniscient, constantly observing and judging human actions, holding both blessings and punishments in his hands,⁸⁹ in strict reciprocity to human attitude and behaviour:

His *b3w* (punishing power) is vehement,
 he is more powerful than Sakhmet,
 like fire in a storm;
 his mercy is high, he takes care of him who adores him,

86 Cf. Assmann 1975, 60–64 and 1979, 31 for this concept.

87 Cf. Borghouts 1982.

88 Otto 1954, 22ff.; Brunner 1963; Vernus 1985.

89 This concept has to be distinguished from 'Amun judge of the poor,' the latter being concerned with the ancient concept of protecting the weak against the strong and not with the idea of reward vs. punishment. One could perhaps make use of the ingenious Aristotelian distinction between *iustitia distributiva* (protecting the poor) and *iustitia commutativa* (judging man's actions) to account for the difference between the two concepts of 'protector' and 'judge' which are conflated in the Egyptian terminology.

he turns to heal his suffering.
 For he looks upon men, there is no one whom he does not know,
 and he listens to millions of them.
 Who could resist thy wrath who avert the fury of thy power?⁹⁰

The classical text is the teaching of Amenemope. Here Maat is explicitly put into free disposition of god, thus identified with the will of god and treated as a synonym of *hzw* 'favour':

As for Maat, the great gift of god:
 he gives it to whom he likes.⁹¹

This amounts to a disappearance of the concept of Maat. The concepts of Maat and of divine intervention seem to be mutually exclusive.

The anthropocentric reading of 'fate' and 'history,' interpreting success as manifestations of favour (*hzw*, *hwpw*) and failure as manifestations of wrath (*b3w*),⁹² leads to the concept of God as the 'designer of history.' The flow of events (eg. *hprwt* 'what happens') becomes understood as the immediate implementation of god's will: *k3.k hprwt nbwt* "Your 'Ka' (will, intention, design) is everything that happens (=history)"⁹³ or *wd.n.k pw hprwt nbwt* "Everything that happens is what you have ordered".⁹⁴ This is a new vision of history. The traditional attitude towards history — this term always to be understood in the sense of *hprwt* 'the flow of events' with regard rather to the future than to the past — was skeptic and pessimistic. "You can not know what will happen,"⁹⁵ "there are no limits to what will happen,"⁹⁶ "You cannot know what will happen so that you might recognize the morrow."⁹⁷ According to the Instruction for Merikare, god gave man magic as a weapon to shield off 'the blow of

90 Stela Louvre C 256 (Banishment) ed. v. Beckerath 1968.

91 Amenemope 21.5–6; Grumach 1972, 134. In the interpretation of this passage I am following Brunner 1963.

92 Borghouts 1982.

93 TT 23 cf. Assmann 1983b Nr.17, pp. 18–23. Similarly Luxor inscription of Ramses II, KRI II, 346.8: *k3f wnnt nbt* "His Ka is everything what exists"; pLeiden J 350, V, 17: *k3f wnnt nbt jmj r3.f* "His Ka is everything existing as utterance in his mouth".

94 Hittite Marriage, KRI II, 249.10.

95 Kagemni: pPrisse II.2 cf. pRamesseum I.18.

96 Letter to the Dead from Naga ed-Deir, ed. Simpson 1966.

97 Ptahhotep 343, cf 345 in the London #2 version: "there is no one who knows his condition (his luck) when he plans the morrow" which corresponds verbatim to pRamesseum I B1.6 cf. Barns 1956, 6.

what will happen.’⁹⁸ This concept of *hprwt*, ‘what will happen’ seems bare of any religious significance. It is not conceived of as a realm of divine intention and manifestation. This is precisely what changes with the New Kingdom. Instead of the traditional attitude of a somewhat fatalistic pessimism which is so prominent, e.g. in epistolary style (“Today I am fine, but my condition of tomorrow I do not know”), we now find pious compliance with god’s plans (“Today I am fine; the morrow is in the hand of God”).⁹⁹

3.2.3 Politology of divine will.

Movements must be interpreted according to what they lead to. In the case of the theology of will, this is the establishment of direct theocracy. The Theban theocracy — being the 21st Dynasty — lies outside the scope of the present investigation, but as its ultimate consequence, it is present in the movement as such. Seen in this light, the theology of will appears to have been destructive with regard to the vision of political order implied in the classical conception. The classical conception can be characterized as a ‘representative theocracy,’ god ruling through the king as his representative, by ‘indirect causation.’ His own kingship is confined (a) to the mythical, and (b) to the celestial sphere: he ruled once, in a ‘Golden Age,’ directly on earth, when heaven and earth had not been separated and gods and men lived together, and he exerts now, after the separation of heaven and earth, gods and men, his rule by means of the solar cycle.¹⁰⁰ Most of the instances where Re or AmunRe are called ‘king’ refer either to mythical¹⁰¹ or to celestial kingship.¹⁰² But there are hymns which accumulate royal epithets in a way which cannot be explained in terms of mythical or celestial kingship: they obviously refer to political kingship, insinuating that god, since he is the only protector and saviour, is the only true king as well. The most explicit hymns in this respect, alas unpublished, are written on the verso of the Leiden Papyrus of the Admonitions — of all places.¹⁰³

98 P 136–7. For the concept of Magic as being a weapon, cf. also Derchain 1987.

99 See Assmann 1975, 66.

100 The most explicit account of the Golden Age and its decline is contained in the Book of the Heavenly Cow, see Hornung 1982; cf. Kakosy 1964.

101 These instances have been collected and carefully analyzed by Luft 1978.

102 I understand the term ‘celestial kingship’ to include the title ‘king of gods,’ constantly associated with Amun(Re) and relating to the idea of presidency over the divine world. This concept is common both to the Classical Dogma and to Near Eastern religions in general where there is always a chief of the pantheon. To denote this structure, E. Voegelin has coined the term ‘summodeism.’

103 Zandee 1975. Zandee does not make the necessary distinctions between mythical, ‘celestial’ and political kingship (let alone eschatological which is the Judaeo-Christian concept) and thus confuses the issues considerably. But his paper gives a certain idea of the otherwise unpublished text.

As is well known, Amun rules his state by giving oracles. This institution, too, becomes increasingly common already during the New Kingdom. Oracles are only the institutionalized form of divine manifestations including dreams, omens, and those interventions which are subsumed under the term *b3w* 'manifestation of (punishing) power,'¹⁰⁴ all of these being characteristic of Ramessid culture and affecting its political structure. The base of royal legitimation changes. The 'initial installation' comes to appear insufficient: what counts is *hzwt*, 'favour, blessing, success,' as in the private sphere. Ramses II builds his image not so much on his 'initial installation' than on a divine intervention in his favour, the event in Kadesh,¹⁰⁵ and is followed in this respect by Merenptah and Ramses III. Merenptah interprets his victory over the Libyans as a sign, that "Re has turned his face again towards Egypt"¹⁰⁶ and in a hymn to Ramses VI we read "Amun has turned his face toward Egypt."¹⁰⁷ History ceases to be a 'ritual,'¹⁰⁸ it becomes the test and the touching stone of a king's legitimacy and gains a quite new significance.¹⁰⁹

The king, being reduced to the necessity of gaining god's favour and by this fact being subject to god's judgment of his actions as everybody else has recourse to the virtues of piety, too. The piety of the king is of course a very central idea also in the context of the Classical Dogma. But there it is regarded as a question of engagement in temple building and donations and not so much as a question of inner attitude. This changes already remarkably with Hatshepsut whose inscriptions profess a peculiar devotion. But all this is still a far cry from the confession of personal piety which Ramses III¹¹⁰ had inscribed on a tablet of silver and dedicated to his memorial temple in Karnak,¹¹¹ or from the text on another stela:

In your great name I trust,
with your designs I fill myself,
doing benefactions for you with loving heart.
You are the great lord of him who trusts in him,
the protector of him who approaches him.

104 Borghouts 1982. See now also Griffiths 1988.

105 Assmann 83/84; Ockinga 1987; Goedicke (ed.) 1985.

106 KRI IV, 19.1

107 Condon 1978, 12 line 4; 20; 30. Note that already Sinuhe 'read' his victory over the champion of Retenu as a sign of god's reconciliation.

108 Hornung 1966.

109 See especially Albrektson 1967 for similar conceptions in the Near East. Cf. also Assmann 1983d.

110 But Ramses III., in the Great Harris Papyrus redacted in his name by his son Ramses IV., provides also the best illustration for the ever increasing importance of donations and temple building in the frame of the new concept of piety. All this is too well known to need fuller treatment here.

111 AeHG Nr. 196

Breath, water and life are in your grasp,
Salvation and Health are with you.¹¹²

The king puts himself in the same position of the weak, looking for a protector, as do the other people. He even urges god: "Be my protector!"¹¹³

In the context of the new theology of the will, metaphorically speaking, the 'palace' fades and the 'temple' grows. With the classical conception Egypt loses her political vision, her "Staatsidee."¹¹⁴ There does not seem to be any political vision of particular importance to be implied in the new theology. Its increasing influence leads to a rapid disintegration of the state and to a shrinking of political horizon from 'empire' to 'temple' (in the sense of *pr Jmn*, the temple estate). The theocracy of the 21st Dynasty is a comparatively provincial affair. This is strongly reminiscent of Amarna religion, which has also been connected with a similarly abrupt shrinking of horizon. There seems to be a link between direct theocracy and the reduction of radius. But in every other respect, the contrast to Amarna is perfect: nothing more absurd than the idea of Aten giving oracles, intervening in daily affairs.

3.2.4 Sociology of divine will.

With regard to the sociological implications of the new theology, we may try the same operation as for the political aspect: start from the end. There can be no doubt about the ultimate consequences of the theology of will. The final state of Egyptian civilization could be characterized by the term of 'clericalization' of society. The priests form the leading intellectual and economic elite,¹¹⁵ the temples become the centers of both economic and spiritual-intellectual wealth. This process evidently starts already in the New Kingdom.¹¹⁶

There are two observations to be made. 1) The replacement of 'wisdom' by 'piety.' The old elite was based on the concept of Maat and the ideal of the wise official who by his knowledge of the writings, his self-control and his administrative experience achieves harmony in his own affairs and in society in general. The new elite is based not on social wisdom but on piety, which does not seem to imply a strong idea of social obligations. On the contrary: the intensification of the god-man-relationship is at the expense of social coherence, quite in the same way as the political significance of divine rule drains the concept of pharaonic empire. Corruption and social insecurity grow during the Ramessid period to an alarming degree.¹¹⁷

112 KRI V, 239; Assmann 1983a, 265f.

113 pHarris, AeHG Nr.197.

114 Brunner 1982 = 1988, 103ff.

115 J. Johnson 1986. See generally Eisenstadt 1985.

116 Kees 1953; Sauneron 1957 who, however, disregards the historical dimension.

117 cf. Brunner 1982 and Helck 1982.

2. The rise of clerics.¹¹⁸ The will of god needs to be interpreted and to be translated into actions and institutions. A theology of will inevitably would give rise to the emergence of a new class of diviners, interpreters and prophets. This is what can be observed to happen during the course of the New Kingdom. The oracular priest, preparing and recording the oracular decisions is quite a common figure in Ramessid society. Priests were also occupied in finding out the cause of a calamity and in fixing the conditions of possibly reconciling the offended deity.¹¹⁹ But what is more decisive still is the emergence of divination, which seems to have been quite foreign to ancient Egypt, in contrast to Mesopotamia. Diviners are repeatedly mentioned¹²⁰ and a divination manual has been found at Der el Medinah.¹²¹ Above all, the entourage of Pharaoh seems now to acquire its characteristic appearance, which is so familiar to us from the biblical records. The *ḥartummim*, who surround Pharaoh in the stories about Moses and Joseph in the function of councillors, dream-readers, diviners and magicians, correspond etymologically and functionally to the *ḥrjw tp* who appear in the dedicatory inscription of Ramses II,¹²² in pVandier¹²³ and in the Setne novel.¹²⁴

The sources of the period and above all pVandier draw a picture of the social life in the time of later New Kingdom which is rather sinister. The temples prosper from the donations of pious kings, whereas the people, bereft of the protection and confidence in Maat, suffered from violence, distrust and poverty. Such a hiatus between the prosperity of the temples and that of the people seems unthinkable in official ideology, but it is exactly what is depicted in the tale of pVandier. The accumulating scandals and affairs fit perfectly into the picture of social corruption and disintegration.

Egypt, during this ongoing crisis, proved incapable of finding an alternative to the waning concept of Maat. The movement of Personal Piety and the theology of will did not break through towards a novel vision of political and social order, to be based on religious ideas. The history of the late New Kingdom thus provides an impressive example of the destructive forces which a theology of will and its human counterpart, piety, may imply. The exclusive self-commitment to the will of God may foster social and political disintegration, as long as solidarity and brotherhood are not expressly recognized to be just what God wants man to realize. This is obviously the achievement not of Egypt but of Israel. It seems to me very symbolic that Israelite

118 See esp. Eisenstadt 1985.

119 For the institutions of 'Personal Piety' see Borghouts 1982. Note, however, that the 'wise woman' (*t3 rht*) who specialized in finding out the identity of offended deities was not a professional priest, see Borghouts *ibid.* 24–27.

120 Brunner 1973 = 1988, 224–229 and 1977, 45f. Cf. also Leclant 1968.

121 pDer el Medineh I ed. Cerný & Posener 1978.

122 KRI II 326.7

123 Posener 1985, 19.

124 For the etymology of *ḥartummim* see Quaegebeur 1985 and 1987.

religion, which according to the scriptures went through its decisive formative phase in Egypt, can be regarded as the solution to the problem which had arisen in Egypt and caused its decline. The solution is the command to love your fellow like yourself (Leviticus 19.18). The man-society-relationship cannot be transferred to the man-god-relationship (and vice-versa). A new form of social linkage must be found and established, wherein both relations are retained in mutual reinforcement. This new form is 'religion' in the strong sense which Israel seems to have been the first to realize. It always establishes a triangular relationship: God — Man — Community. The Hebrew concept of covenant (*berît*) and the corresponding inner attitude of 'faith,' *'emunah* translated by *pistis* in the Septuagint) refer to this triangle. It encompasses the attitudes of Man towards God *and* towards the community, and of God toward individual Man *and* the People. In Egypt, the concept of 'people' in the emphatic sense of a religious community — Hebr. *'am* as opposed to *goyîm*, 'gentiles' — is missing, where the collectivity as a possible partner of God is embodied in, and thus monopolized by Pharaoh. Maat had in fact established a 'triangular relationship' between Man, God, and Community. After the decline of the concept of Maat, a similar order could only be established by converting the collective identity embodied in 'Pharaoh' into the idea of religious brotherhood.

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