

# Origins of Apotheosis in Ancient Egypt

By  
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B.A., University of California, Los Angeles, 2008

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in  
the Department of Egyptology and Assyriology  
at Brown University

Providence, Rhode Island

May 2015

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The dissertation by Julia Dawn Troche is accepted in its present form  
by the Department of Egyptology and Assyriology as satisfying  
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## Curriculum Vitae

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During her time at Brown University Julia has taught her own undergraduate course, “Daily Life in Ancient Egypt,” and taught for the Summer at Brown Program for five years, including the classes “Middle Egyptian Hieroglyphs,” “Ancient Egyptian Religion and Magic,” and “Art and Archaeology of Ancient Egypt.” Julia also worked at the Brown University Writing Center where she received training in teaching English for English Language Learners. She received a Sheridan Teaching Certificate I from the Sheridan Center for Teaching and Learning and Higher Education, and participated in the Spatial Structures in the Social Sciences GIS Institute and Teaching with Technology Summer Institute.

Julia has also engaged in a number of public outreach activities including organizing an “Ancient Egypt Day” for a local Middle School, publishing articles for a popular children and teen’s history magazine, and co-curating an exhibit at the Haffenreffer Museum of Anthropology. Her work with the non-profit PublicVR, which developed three-dimensional virtual reality exemplar models of ancient Egyptian temples that were projected into immersive environments for teaching, was published in the XXXVIII Computer Applications and Quantitative Methods in Archaeology electronic conference proceedings. Julia has presented her research at numerous domestic and international venues including the annual meetings of the Archaeological Institute of America, American Research Center in Egypt, Theoretical Archaeology Group, and the American Schools of Oriental Research. She worked as an excavator, surveyor, and epigrapher for the Brown University Petra Archaeological Project, the Brown University Abydos Project, and the Karnak Graffiti Project directed by Oxford Professor Elizabeth Froid under the auspices of the *Centre Franco-Égyptien d’Études des Temples de Karnak*.

At Brown, Julia won various internal and external awards for travel and research. She also was awarded the Mellon Graduate Student Workshop Award through the Cogut Center for the Humanities, an International Affairs Graduate International Colloquium Grant, and a Brown University 250th Anniversary Award to celebrate the legacy of Egyptology at Brown through the cataloging, recording, and exhibition of the Department of Egyptology’s artifact collection.

## Acknowledgments

The present work has benefited from the advice, critique, and support from the inspiring community of scholars, past and present, who have studied the ancient world at Brown University. Particularly, I would like to thank my advisor, James P. Allen, for his constant support and encouragement. I am also grateful for the revisions and professional guidance provided by my field directors and dissertation committee readers Laurel Bestock and Elizabeth Froom. My entire committee has been incredibly flexible and generous with their time and expertise for which I am truly appreciative.

I am extremely grateful to John Steele and Matthew Rutz for providing institutional support. I want to thank John Steele for supporting my work and setting the standard high for academic success within our department. I would like to express my deep gratitude to Matthew Rutz for helping me navigate the dissertation process and for being our department's professionalization guru. I am also indebted to Florence Friedman and Jiří Janák who both offered advice while I was researching the *akh*, and to Sue Alcock, the members of CRAM, and the faculty, visiting scholars, and students of the Department of Egyptology and Assyriology who have offered feedback on this project at various stages.

No academic degree is possible without administrative support, and Claire Benson and Catherine Hanni went above and beyond, for which I am truly grateful.

A special thanks to my cohort—Kathryn Howley and Guan Yuzhen—and to my officemates—Willis Monroe, Zack Wainer, Christian Casey, Jessica Tomkins, Maggie Geoga, and Emily Drennan—for their humor and encouragement. I am grateful to Erin Fairburn and Sung Hwan Yoo for their early guidance, and to Amanda Davis and Emily Drennan who helped edit parts of this dissertation. I would also like to thank my all of friends and colleagues who have challenged and inspired me, especially Susan Herringer for her friendship and support, and Jennifer Thum whose collaboration has been stimulating.

My greatest support has come from my family. My mother, Patricia, has been a constant, eternal source of encouragement and love. My big brother, Ray, has always inspired and supported me, as has my sister-in-law Amanda, and their daughter, Willow, has brought me so much needed joy during this past year. I'd like to thank Tito Perez and Susan Campbell who have always supported my education and my dreams. I also want to thank the Brinkman Family—Kandie, Terry, Bart, Colleen, Britney, Sam, and Bret—for their support. A special acknowledgement is for my grandma, Hattie Wilburn, and my aunt, Debra Troche who, if they could be here, would be among my biggest champions. I am grateful to Phoebe for her companionship. Finally, the *sine qua non* of this project has been the unwavering support of my husband, Bryan Brinkman. His scholarship inspires me to become a better scholar and his friendship motivates me to become a better person, and for this I am eternally grateful.

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# **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

## **Chapter 1.1: Background**

In nearly every culture there exist socio-religious processes through which certain humans are marked as metaphysically distinct, of elevated status. In some instances these humans have been associated with supernatural qualities that set them apart as heroes, demi-gods, and gods. These men—and sometimes women, though not nearly as often—can range in their divine distinctions: from simply possessing a few divine attributes to being bona-fide gods, and everything in between. The modes, however, through which this supernatural identity is imagined and articulated, and the socio-religious roles these supernatural humans play differ across time and space. The phenomenon of apotheosis—the process through which one becomes divinized—has been the topic of few Egyptological studies, but has been particularly popular as a research inquiry for studies of the ancient Mediterranean, Classical world. These better-studied examples show the range and variety of forms this practice could take. The small Near Eastern dataset of divinized kings, for example, has provided scholars with fruitful analytical returns (Brisch 2008). The study of the Greek practices of "hero cult" and the more proliferate "tomb cult," which is attested as early as the tenth century B.C.E., have popularized the utilization of the term "hero" for semi-divine figures across disciplines (Baines 1991:158f; Antonaccio 1995, 6). Heroes were legendary, and, thus, their textual and



archaeological records blur the lines between divine myth and personal histories.

Alexander the Great had, additionally, introduced a practiced referred to as "ruler cult," in which Alexander was divinized during his lifetime. In the Roman world this manifested as "imperial cult" (Bosworth 1999). Beginning with Augustus, emperors deemed worthy could be awarded divine honors, raising them to the status of a god upon their death and sometimes evidence for this elevated status (*divus*) was traceable during their lifetimes. This apotheosis extended not only to rulers, but also to their families and loved ones; most famously Antinous, the lover of Hadrian, was deified after his death in Egypt where a city was built and dedicated to his divinized cult. Indeed, apotheosis became widespread in Egypt during the Hellenistic period—a trend that continued into the Christian and Islamic eras in the form of saints and *wali*.

This study is primarily interested in investigating the earliest examples of apotheosis in ancient Egypt, dating to the Old through Middle Kingdoms (c. 2700-1650 BCE). Only six examples are currently known from these periods, though comparanda, such as the attestations of deified kings in Mesopotamia, is similar in number (Brisch 2008). This suggests that this small dataset is a reflex of the restrictiveness of the phenomenon rather than an incomplete archaeological record. Admittedly, though, the size of the dataset does need to be acknowledged and it does mean that the trends identified here could be challenged as new evidence comes to light. This study will present the extant evidence and interpret it, contextualizing it culturally and historically, as best as can be done under the current circumstances. It will show that the episodic, restrictive nature of apotheosis is what makes it productive as a category of study. It was not normative; it was historically exceptional. Therefore, the time, places, and settings of

apotheosis bear significant meaning. The intimacy between apotheosis and its historical and cultural contexts enables this study to draw out conclusions about the phenomenon's place within ancient Egypt's socio-religious landscape and its historical utility.

Notably, during the Old through Middle Kingdoms, apotheosis seems to have uniquely occurred posthumously, allowing us to speak of “deified” or “distinguished” dead. This factor complicates investigations of apotheosis in ancient Egypt, because, for the entirety of ancient Egyptian history, there was an elaborate and productive mortuary cult for the dead. This mortuary cult enabled the dead to remain “alive” after corporeal demise as active, supernatural members of social networks. Thus, any inquiry into the processes of apotheosis must first delineate between evidence of apotheosis and the processes of the mortuary cult. Additionally, there is some evidence to suggest that one could actively construct this posthumous identity while still alive, in which case we would need to consider apotheosis as a product of two agents—the community which recognized the posthumous, divine status, and the individuals who intentionally constructed their divine identities. The earliest known example of an attempt at this extreme form of posthumous identity construction dates to the Middle Kingdom, though the desired apotheosis was not realized until the New Kingdom (and thus not included in this study). This is evinced through funerary texts of Djefai-Hapi, a Twelfth Dynasty nomarch of Asyut. In these texts he attempts to claim divine pedigree; Djefai-Hapi in his tomb calls himself: *s3 Wp-w3wt ms.tiw=f* “the son of Wepwaut, his greatest offspring.” Additionally contracts between him and local priesthoods provide evidence for his attempt to contractually arrange for a posthumous cult dedicated to his worship, unique from his mortuary cult (Kahl 2012, 181). New Kingdom graffiti, which refers to a temple

(*hwt-ntr*) of Djefai-Hapi, confirms that his apotheosis was eventually recognized (Kahl 2012, 168-169). The social and religious implications of Djefai-Hapi's attempt to prepare for his own apotheosis speaks to potential shifts in the processes of divine identity construction; however, since there is not evidence for his deification until the New Kingdom, it seems as though it was not yet possible, during the Middle Kingdom, to successfully prepare for your own apotheosis.

Beginning in the New Kingdom there is a relative explosion of evidence related to the practice of apotheosis (von Lieven 2010). Because of this, scholarship has almost exclusively dealt with these later historical periods (New Kingdom, and Late through Roman Periods), without much consideration of the earlier periods (Old through Middle Kingdoms). Thus, an additional challenge in researching apotheosis in ancient Egypt is the preponderance of evidence and scholarship focusing on the New Kingdom through Roman periods (Wildung 1977; von Lieven 2010). Apotheosis becomes a fairly widespread phenomenon, especially in the Late, Ptolemaic, and Roman Periods (among others: Antonaccio 1995; Bosworth 1999; Jones 2010). Most famous are the cults dedicated to the divinized forms of Imhotep and Amunhotep son of Hapu whose cult worship is observed even within the bounds of state temples. Notably, a finely carved offering scene depicting both individuals was inscribed on the outer facing, east wall of the temple of Ptah at Karnak Temple as part of a secondary inscriptional episode—i.e. graffiti (Wildung 1977). Additionally, kings of the New Kingdom, such as Amunhotep III and Ramesses II, displayed themselves in overtly divine ways (e.g. depicting themselves with the ram horns of Amun), claimed divine births, etc. (Wildung 1973; Wildung 1977; Malek 2000; Bickel 2002). At least for the New Kingdom, Bell has

convincingly suggested that the king was both mortal and divine—a mortal man who, upon his admittance into the office of king, was endowed with the divine *ka* of kingship (Bell 1985). Malek warns, though, that this could simply be the king embodying the manifestation of the god, and “being the god’s manifestation does not make the king himself a god” (Malek 2000, 242). I would argue, however, that being a manifestation of a god does make one divine. In either case, the king was certainly mortal, and the office of kingship was certainly divine. I suggest that the king was a man (or woman) whose social role (kingship) transfigured him into a divine being while in office; he may not have been Amun or Re, but as a manifestation of these gods, he too was divine. Conceptually, it would be easy to see how this may have been (we have no texts that tell us for sure) how the deified and distinguished dead in this study were understood: mortal men, whose posthumous social roles demanded a transfigured status. Furthering this claim, however, would be, problematically, anachronistic.

The inherent challenge, then, is to avoid allowing this overwhelming dataset of royal deification and New Kingdom and later examples of apotheosis to influence interpretations of apotheosis in Old through Middle Kingdom Egypt. Though many scholars present Egyptian religion and culture in monolithic terms, there was great variation, in fact, in the ancient Egyptian conception of the divine, the king, and the dead (among other things). Thus, such analysis is inherently anachronistic. The cultural context in which Antinous was deified by Hadrian in the second century CE was fundamentally different from the cultural context in which Heqaib was deified, some two-thousand years earlier. As such, the motivations, processes, and decorum that regulated apotheosis in Ptolemaic Egypt cannot, and should not, be applied wholesale to

earlier periods. Often, though, this is what is seen in the scholarship since there is comparatively paltry evidence for apotheosis in these earlier periods (von Lieven forthcoming). The lack of scholarship on this topic also suggests, even if unintentionally, that a full consideration of the earliest attestations of apotheosis is less important, or less meaningful, either for the ancient Egyptians or for current research. This study intends to rectify this misconception.

An investigation of apotheosis, therefore, needs to overcome two analytical challenges: (1) how to distinguish between evidence of apotheosis and quotidian mortuary cult, and (2) how to produce meaningful research with such a limited corpus. In this study, I provide solutions to both of these problems. First, I have established a framework for identifying distinction and deification, unique from the mortuary cult, in the textual and archaeological records. Second, I consider apotheosis to be part a shared phenomenon, which distinguishes certain dead and marks others as gods. Thus, my dataset, by not being limited to only fully articulated examples of apotheosis, is large enough to provide productive analytical returns and is more reflective of the ancient Egyptian emic reality. Instead of looking at apotheosis in isolation, I consider non-royal living-dead interactions more generally and situate apotheosis into a historicized spectrum of cultural behaviors. Specifically, I investigate the earliest attestations, the origins, of apotheosis, which can be dated to the Old through Middle Kingdoms (c. 2700-1650 BCE).

I begin with the Old Kingdom, because it is within the Old Kingdom that the first recorded internal evidence for an emic concept of apotheosis is found. Pyramid Text spell 477, dating to the reign of Pepi I, reads *di=f sw m-m ntr.w ntr.w*, “He puts him (the king)

among the gods who have become divine.”<sup>1</sup> This shows that by the Sixth Dynasty there is a recognized divinization process through which some gods, who may not have been originally divine, could *become* divine. In the reign of Merenre and Pepi II, the same spell is subtly changed to explicitly express the ability of certain dead, as *akh*, to become divine: *di.n=f PEPI dpt 3h.w=f ntr.w*, “He has put (Pepi) at the head of his *akhs* who have become divine.” The king is distinctly set apart from these divinized beings, though he is described as being at their head and among them. It is clear that the concept of apotheosis, of becoming divine, was reserved for the dead, specifically the *akh*. The king’s divinity was unique from this process, and therefore is not considered in this study except to explain how historical shifts in royal power could have influenced the socio-religious utility of apotheosis. Additionally, the Middle Kingdom is a natural and logical research boundary because there is a fundamental philosophical shift in how the divine is imagined and engaged with in the New Kingdom, traces of which are identifiable in the Third Intermediate Period (Assmann 2001). Thus, although Imhotep was an Old Kingdom official, his apotheosis did not occur until, at the earliest, the New Kingdom, and, as such, will not be included in this survey (Quack 2014).

This study has four primary research goals: (1) to establish a framework for identifying distinction and apotheosis in the archaeological and textual records of the Old through Middle Kingdoms, so that the corpus can be clearly defined, and an evaluative schema can be provided for future research; (2) to collate and present the evidence related to the origins of apotheosis, so that (3) its processes can be identified and understood within its shared societal, cultural, and religious networks of meaning; and to (4)

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<sup>1</sup> All Pyramid Texts referenced in this study are my own translations, unless otherwise stated, based on Sethe 1908.

historicize the phenomenon in order to describe the historic contexts in which apotheosis first emerges in an attempt to hypothesize the potential motivations and impetuses for its occurrence. Thus, through this investigation, I will be able to arrive at some conclusions regarding the appearance of apotheosis in the archaeological record, its similarities/dissimilarities to other contemporary cults of the dead, and its utility for the living.

While the modes of decorum that governed the active display of deified humans and the socio-religious implications of apotheosis certainly changed during Egyptian history, this focused study is in many ways the last piece of a puzzle. This study will be particularly complementary to Alexandra von Lieven's forthcoming habilitation thesis, *Heiligenkult und Vergöttlichung im Alten Ägypten*, which, as I understand it, will cast a wide net, investigating "saint cult" and "deification" in all periods of Egyptian history, but with a particular emphasis on the abundant evidence known from the Ptolemaic and Roman Periods. Additionally, this study will be a useful addition to the only, which is presently published, monograph on the topic: Dietrich Wildung's 1977 *Egyptian Saints: Deification in Pharaonic Egypt*. In three chapters, Wildung's monograph addresses the cases of sacred kingship, Imhotep, and Amunhotep, son of Hapu. Though there are no other studies dedicated to the topic of apotheosis in ancient Egypt, a number of important articles and books, in speaking about specific cases, make some important observations and arguments. Particularly relevant is von Lieven's presentation of deified dead in a short UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology article (2010), Baines' inclusion of deified dead as potential evidence for what he refers to as "early piety" (Baines 1986, 34-25), Goedicke's discussions of the deification of Djedi and Hordjedef (Goedicke 1955;

Goedicke 1958a), and Fischer's rebuttal that the reverence afforded to these beings, "was never carried so far as to put them on the same footing as the gods" (Fischer 1965, 52). "These words of caution," Fischer continues, "would hardly be necessary were it not for the case which Hans Goedicke has attempted to make" about Djedi (Fischer 1965, 52). Surprisingly, it is Goedicke who, of all people, denies that Heqaib was a god, despite his clearly being identified as such: "Heqaib kann nicht von einer Vergöttlichung gesprochen werden, da kein Kult bestand" (no.14 LÄ VI, 991). This banter in the scholarship raises the question—how *do* we identify apotheosis and "distinction" in the archaeological and textual records in a way that is reflective of emic ancient Egyptian perceptions of humanity and divinity, rather than our own notions of "what it means to be a god"?

## **Chapter 1.2: Markers of Distinction and Deification**

Informed, I suspect, by etic notions of what divinity should look like in antiquity, there is reluctance in the scholarship against identifying these beings as gods. Indeed, many scholars deny the full deification of the beings discussed in this study until texts explicitly identify them as a god, "*nfr*," which we don't see until the Middle Kingdom in the cases of Heqaib and Isi. But why should our scholarship rely only upon explicit textual reference when ancient Egyptian religion, as argued by Assmann (2001), was implicit until the New Kingdom—meaning, there did not exist explicit treatises or theological discourses. Furthermore, Egyptian religion throughout its history was fundamentally inclusive, not exclusive (with the obvious exception of the Amarna Period). The lack of explicit identification of some of these dead as a god before the Middle Kingdom could be a factor of surviving evidence, decorum, or the implicit nature



of ancient Egyptian theology. It could also be a reflex of them possessing unique positions within the Egyptian pantheon as “local gods,” since their mortal, local identities were never denied. In fact, it seems as though their humanity made them more accessible to their regional communities. Therefore, I dismiss this overly conservative schema, which demands the explicit use of the term *ntr* for identifying apotheosis.

I have identified eight markers that communicated either a “distinguished” status or evidence of apotheosis. I identified these markers by first determining how the status of an “average” dead was constructed, in order to create a normative baseline (*vide infra* §2). I then pinpointed the exclusive elements that marked the kings and gods as divine in the Old through Middle Kingdoms. Thereupon, I looked for these exclusive markers among the non-royal dead—and I speak of the dead, specifically, because there is no definitive evidence for these processes occurring before one’s death in this period. In doing so, I discerned two “levels” of status: (1) “above-average” distinction, what I refer to as “distinguished” dead, and (2) deified dead who underwent apotheosis. Both of these levels of status were active and mutable over time. Within each level, there was a range in the active, popular display of status, which causes some dead to have seemingly more modest articulations of status. This could indicate that conceptually, there were more than these two status levels, or that available evidence only communicates part of the story; specifically, we lack the oral traditions that perpetuated the memories and folklore that surrounded these beings and gave them their status. The lines that demarcate these categories are not exact. In part, this is due to the state of available evidence and scholarship, but it is mostly due to the fact that this is a false etic categorization of what, I suggest, the ancient Egyptians saw as fluid and dynamic. Although it is best to consider

the entirety of the evidence holistically, I suggest that these markers act as a sort of binary detection for distinguished status or apotheosis. Meaning, if there is evidence for even one of these markers, that individual should be considered of that status. This is especially true for the more restrictive markers of apotheosis.

Table 1, below, shows the distribution of my identified markers of distinction and apotheosis for each case discussed in this study. The cases are arranged chronologically by their date of distinction or deification, as best as can be ascertained. From this arrangement it becomes clear that apotheosis is most fully articulated in the Middle Kingdom, in the cases of Heqaib and Isi. From the Old Kingdom, only Djedi, Mehu, and Kagemni possessed markers of apotheosis, while Ptahhotep, Hordjedef, and the Governors of ‘Ain Asil possessed markers of a distinguished status, which qualify them as “above-average” dead.

TABLE 1: List of case studies with the markers of distinction and apotheosis attested for each									
	Markers of Distinction			Markers of Apotheosis					
	1. <i>imꜣḫ.w ḫr</i> formula	2a. fame: textual evidence <sup>2</sup>	2b. fame: archaeological evidence <sup>3</sup>	1. <i>nꜥr</i> “god” or divine determinative	2. <i>ḥtp-dꜣt</i> - <i>nswt</i> formula	3. theophoric names	4. shrine	5. priesthood	6. actor in festival
Old Kingdom									
Djedi	X	X (?)		X				X	
Ptahhotep	X	X							
Mehu						X			
Hordjedef	X	X							
Kagemni	X	X	X			X			
Governors of ‘Ain Asil			X						
Middle Kingdom									
Heqaib	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Isi		X		X	X	X			
Wahka (II ?)			X		X	X			

<sup>2</sup> Examples of textual evidence of fame includes pseudoepigraphic attribution of authorship of wisdom texts, inclusion in lists of “great writers” known from the New Kingdom, and invocation in non-theophoric names.

<sup>3</sup> Examples of archaeological evidence of fame includes the maintenance of monuments dedicated to one’s cult, and the clustering of burials near one’s tomb.

Furthermore, in order to understand the origins of apotheosis, it is helpful to situate the phenomenon within the socio-religious landscape of ancient Egypt, which allowed for varied engagement with a multitude of supernatural entities (*ntr*, *ꜥh ikr*, etc.). It is necessary to view deified dead as existing within a larger network that connected the earthly realm with the divine Hereafter through various agents: the living, the dead, and the gods. Despite our notions of agency, each of these groups was perceived to have the ability to affect real change in the visible, lived world. The *imꜣh.w hr* formula (discussed below) is one way in which we can begin to understand the perceived nuance in these agents' abilities—their effectiveness and their ubiquity. As such, it is possible to speak of a spectrum of effectiveness, or a spectrum of distinction for the dead. It is important to note that it is not a continuum—one status does not necessarily lead to the other. When evidence for this spectrum of distinction is historicized, two trends emerge: (1) a distinct shift in how the dead are engaged becomes visible near the end of the Old Kingdom, especially during the Sixth Dynasty, and (2) the display of the dead's social capital within local landscapes is informed by their proximity to the Residence. Effective dead in the provinces are more fully recognized as gods, but this realization occurs over many generations. Contrarily, the dead near the capital are more expeditiously raised in status, but their status was limited by decorum, as their invocation existed, in some instances literally, in the shade of the king's influence symbolized by his pyramid. The quick display of divine status was likely due to the fact that dependency on the king was most pronounced near the Residence and, thus, the living were more reliant on these structures of power relations. When the king's role shifted in the Sixth Dynasty, it was like

removing a rung from a ladder. In order to keep the ladder in use, the rung was quickly replaced and took the form of deified dead.

### Chapter 1.2a: Discussion of Markers of Distinction

There are two types of distinguishing markers used to identify distinguished dead. Distinction is primarily marked by (1) the dead's inclusion in *imꜣh.w hr* formulae (to be fully discussed below). Invocation in this formula was restricted and speaks to one's special status. Associated evidence (2) such as the dead's fame in cultural memory can be evinced by texts that extoll their fame, or by the upkeep of certain monuments, which were dedicated to the memory of these figures. Particularly vocal are New Kingdom texts (e.g. Harper's Song) that make reference to Old Kingdom dead—which indicates that their fame was transmitted through cultural memory for hundreds of years—and monuments dedicated to one's cult, which are kept separate from the tomb and its associated mortuary cult—e.g. settlement *ka*-chapels (*hwt-kꜣ*).

The *imꜣh.w hr* formula, though, is the clearest marker for identifying “distinguished” dead. Unfortunately, this marker is strictly textual and, thus, limits the types of sources that can be consulted. Additionally, the concept of *imꜣh* certainly predated its earliest recorded usage in text, which was in the tomb of Rahotep at Meidum, dating to the end of the Third or beginning of the Fourth Dynasty (Garnot 1941, 6 no.5). This term is often found in funerary contexts with the preposition *hr*, together being translated as “venerable to,” “favored by,” or “honored by” someone (see below for a discussion of this translation). The “someone” in this construction is almost always the king (often referred to as “his lord” *nb=f*) or a deity, including deified dead (Djedi,

Kagemni, Heqaib), which emphasized their role as funerary gods. The formula only rarely invoked a husband, parent, or local man of power (Gaber 2003, 26). There are less than a dozen examples from the Old through Middle Kingdoms in which this formula invokes an “ordinary” person (not the king or a god) for whom there is no extant evidence of apotheosis or distinction otherwise. The examples of “ordinary” people being invoked through this formula fall into 3 categories:

- (1) Woman to her husband: *im3h.wt hr hi=s*;<sup>4</sup> *im3h.wt hr hi=s rꜥ nb*<sup>5</sup>
- (2) Man to a parent: *im3h.w hr it=f*;<sup>6</sup> *im3h.w hr mwt=f*<sup>7</sup>
- (3) Man to “the people”: *im3h.w hr rmt*<sup>8</sup>

The rarity of these examples makes it challenging to interpret. Importantly, these examples are distinct from the examples discussed elsewhere in this study, because they invoke abstract figures, such as “husband,” or “mother” rather than specific individuals. Furthermore, in the example above, in which a man proclaims himself as *im3h* before his father, it is probable that “his father” is meant to indicate the king. This interpretation is based on the fact that this formula is followed by a similar construction, *im3h.w hr it=f nswt*, which clearly identifies “his father” as “the king” through apposition (Hassan 1943, 103). Additionally, I have only been able to identify two examples, that predate the Third Intermediate Period (e.g. the period being considered by this study), of a woman being *im3h* by her husband, and they both date to the Sixth Dynasty, which is significant.<sup>9</sup> Similarly, the example of a man being *im3h* before “the people,” from the tomb of

<sup>4</sup> Adel-Moneim Abu-Bakr, 1953, 69-70.

<sup>5</sup> Selim Hassan, 1941, 82-83.

<sup>6</sup> Selim Hassan, 1943, 103.

<sup>7</sup> Gunther Lapp, 1986, 212

<sup>8</sup> Selim Hassan, 1941, 88; Inscription of Pepinakhheriyib at Meir (Urk. I 222, 5)

<sup>9</sup> The first example, *im3h.wt hr hi=s*, comes from the Giza mastaba of Abdu (Abu-Bakr 1953, 69-82); the second example, *im3h.wt hr hi=s rꜥ nb*, comes from the Giza mastaba of Seshemu (G8656).

Pepyankhheryib at Meir, also dates to the Sixth Dynasty, specifically the reign of Pepi II. Although not all of these examples date to the Sixth Dynasty, they become more common at this time. Considering the fact that the Sixth Dynasty witnessed numerous other cultural and political shifts (*vide infra* §6.2), and that it is during the Sixth Dynasty that we begin to see innovative engagement with the dead in their distinguished and deified forms, it seems likely, that these examples could be indicative of larger socio-religious changes that affected networks of access to the afterlife. Thus, what was once originally an exclusive privilege provided by the king or the gods could have grown to include “ordinary” people, particularly distinguished and deified dead.

Allen has suggested that the term *imꜣh.w* could be a passive participle (“bundled,” “grouped”) of the unattested verb *\*mꜣhi*, “to bundle” (Allen 2006, 16). Additionally, the context in which the term is used clearly shows that the primary meaning of the term is inherently relational—it intends to communicate something about the relationship between two individuals, a recipient and an agent. The recipient of the formula (the one who is *imꜣh*) always possesses the lesser status of the two involved parties. The agent, as previously mentioned, is typically the king or a god. The term, then, also carries a second connotation of worth, defined by this expressed relationship. Thus, Allen suggests we can translate this formula, roughly, as “worthy of association with” (Allen 2006, 16). Person NN is worthy of an association with the king/great god, and, thus, he is favored, honored, etc. (the other translations are also applicable, albeit a bit derivative).<sup>10</sup>

In the funerary context, this notion of “worth” is articulated in a related expression, which explains how or why the deceased was able to build his tomb. Garnot suggests the term *imꜣh* is best understood as a reward provided by the king in the form of

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<sup>10</sup> What Allen calls the “ultimate association between the deceased and the king” (2006, 16).

a good burial, funerary rations, and admittance into the afterlife (Garnot 1941, 31).

Franke sees the *imꜣḥ* relationship as expressing a continuation of the relationship between patron and follower from life into the Hereafter (Franke 1994, 133). This *imꜣḥ* relationship, though, is more than a simple continuation of a patronage relationship. At least in funerary contexts, the *imꜣḥ* relationship was explicitly tied to one's ability to provide access to the Hereafter. Allen (2006, 16) draws attention to an Old Kingdom example that explains: *ir.n=i is pw m šw imꜣḥ=i ḥr nswt in n=i krs* "I made this tomb in the shade of my association with the king, who got a sarcophagus for me."<sup>11</sup> Allen postulates that *imꜣḥ*, then, relates a relationship that is both physical (the tomb is literally in the shade of the king's pyramid because of its close proximity) and temporal (the shade of association is not fleeting, but eternal). The Egyptian elites were *imꜣḥ* by the gods, or the king in his divine role, because it was only through their grace and favor that the elites could fully access the afterlife. This is not to say that they could not access the afterlife otherwise, but that the full privileges of the afterlife were only attained through the king's or the god's grace and favor. When private persons, such as Hordjedef and Ptahhotep, were invoked in this formula, they took on the role of a god, acting as a facilitator aiding (or even enabling) the deceased's journey to the Hereafter. It was, then, through this distinguished individual's grace and favor that the deceased was able to access a privileged afterlife, and it was in the shade of this association that a tomb and funerary equipment was provided.

The *imꜣḥ.w ḥr* formula can thus be used to identify an individual whose role in the necropolis had become assimilated to that of a divine facilitator, one who aided the dead in the crossing between realms. While this alone is not enough to distinguish such

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<sup>11</sup> Urk. I 52, 2



an individual as a god, it does indicate that the invoked individual's status was elevated above that of the "average" dead whose efficacy did not extend so far as to aid in the passage of other dead. Thus, the agent of the *imꜣḥ.w ḥr* formula can be understood as an individual whose status was greater than the "average" dead, but whose potency was less pervasive than a god's. These distinguished dead were godly, but not gods. This may seem like an unnecessary distinction, but it is an important one. All gods could be agents of *imꜣḥ.w* relationships, but not all agents of *imꜣḥ.w* relationships were gods. At least, there is no internal Egyptian evidence to support the characterization of these distinguished dead as gods. The distinguished dead invoked in the *imꜣḥ.w ḥr* formulae expressed a supernatural, superhuman attribute that was typical of the gods, but they themselves were not conceived of as divinities. With these distinctions in mind, it is possible to begin to sketch a web of access and power between the living, the various dead, the king, and the gods. Just as power relations during life were dynamic and multivalent, the social interactions between the living and the dead were similarly diverse.

### **Chapter 1.2b: Discussion of Markers of Apotheosis**

I have identified six markers which communicated divine status: (1) being identified in texts by the term *ntr*, "god," or categorized as one by a divine determinative, (2) inclusion in a *ḥtp-dī-nswt* offering formula, (3) use of one's name in place of a god's in theophoric names, (4) the establishment of a shrine dedicated to one's cult, (5) the establishment of a priesthood charged with the upkeep of the cult, especially one that is locally financed and/or independent from any mortuary cult donations, and (6) being a

principal actor in festival and/or in local mythologies. The table below shows the prevalence of these markers within the dataset of this study.

TABLE 2: Markers of apotheosis known for each deified dead						
Marker of Apotheosis	Djedi	Mehu	Kagemni	Heqaib	Isi	Wahka
1. <i>ntr</i> "god," or divine determinative	x			x	x	
2. <i>hṯp-dī-nswt</i> formula				x	x	x
3. theophoric names		x	x	x	x	x
4. shrine				x		
5. priesthood	x			x		
6. actor in festival				x		

These markers are similar to some of the prerequisites and attributes of deification noted by Kahl, which included being a member of the elite during life, receiving a mortuary cult, occasionally receiving special names, being invoked in theophoric name constructions, being invoked in *imzḥ.w ḥr* and *hṯp-dī-nswt* formulae, being called a god, and being described as *sḥ*, “dignitary” (2012, 171). Some of the attributes presented by Kahl are also markers of deification and have been included in my framework, but others (such as being identified as *sḥ*) are not exclusive attributes of the gods and, therefore, should not be considered diagnostic markers of apotheosis. Additionally, it is worth noting that three of the markers of my framework (#2, 3, & 5) are used by Malek to identify cults of deified Old Kingdom kings in the Middle Kingdom (2000, 243). Since kings are already referred to as gods, have mortuary temple built to honor their posthumous cult, and possess divine pedigree my other markers (#1, 4 & 6) would not be helpful in identifying, what Malek has called, Old Kingdom rulers as “local saints.”

Most of the markers I have listed are rather apparent as to how they communicate divine status and will be dealt with in relevant chapters, but I think it is necessary to elaborate, below, on two markers that could be considered contentious; specifically, I will

discuss how (2) the *ḥtp-di-nswt* offering formula and (3) onomastics can be used to identify cases of apotheosis.

### *ḥtp-di-nswt formula*

The *ḥtp-di-nswt* formula is an offering formula that can be translated to “an offering that the King has given.”<sup>12</sup> The offering mentioned is often related to the tomb or the right to be buried in a certain necropolis.<sup>13</sup> This explains, Allen suggests, why the gods mentioned in this formula are often either funerary gods, or local gods under whose jurisdiction were certain necropolises (Allen 2006, 15). Allen has convincingly argued that the formula acted as “a statement of official sanction for the object or actions referenced in it” (Allen 2006, 14-15). Usually following this formula is a god (or set of gods), followed by the preposition “*n*” or “*hr*” which marks a named recipient of the offering. Some scholars have suggested that this reading of the formula changed in the Middle Kingdom, with the gods becoming recipients of the offerings as well (Gardiner 1957; Lapp 1986; Satzinger 1997). More recent scholarship, however, has repudiated this claim, showing that the gods, even in the Middle Kingdom formulae, were conclusively “not recipients of the ‘offering’ but granters of it” (Franke 2003; Allen 2006, 15). Thus, when Heqaib’s, Isi’s or Wahka’s name is observed as part of this offering formula, they are clearly taking on a role otherwise regulated to gods—supporting the interpretation that they successfully underwent apotheosis and were conceptualized as local gods by their communities. Unlike the *imꜣh.w hr* formula, which only indicates a person’s

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<sup>12</sup> Many scholars translate the formula in present tense “an offering which the king gives.” Satzinger (1997), though, has shown that the formula should usually be translated in the simple past.

<sup>13</sup> To prove that the offering in many cases was the tomb itself, Allen provides a number of examples, see: Allen 2006, 14.

“distinguished” status, the offering formula exclusively invokes the king and gods. The inclusion of private person’s names in this formula, then, is a clear identifying marker of apotheosis.

### ***Onomastic Evidence—Theophoric Name Constructions***

The name (*rn*) was considered a constituent element of the self, of one’s identity, in ancient Egypt. The name possessed power that enabled the dead to be remembered and, thus, live eternally. Names, therefore, were culturally and socially meaningful. Indeed, Vittmann aptly notes, “an important function of the name was as a means of integrating the bearer fully into Egyptian society” (Vittmann 2013a, 4). Often they were short endophoric (lacking any mention of a king or god) descriptive or apotropaic phrases, words, or sentences, but sometimes they invoked the majesty of the king (a basilophoric name) or the divine power of the gods (a theophoric name). In the Old Kingdom it was common to have two names (and rarely three names): the *rn ʕ3*, “the big name,” was the name used in official capacities and was often either a basilophoric or theophoric name; the *rn nḏs*, “the little name,” (also referred to as the *rn nfr*, “the good name”) was the common name or final name (Fecht 1974, 191). During the Middle Kingdom many individuals also possessed two names, but they were presented differently than their Old Kingdom counterparts. Instead of the phrase *rn nfr* introducing the second name, the formula *ḏd.w n=f* “who is called” would introduce a second name, though the types of names and name constructions remained consistent throughout both Kingdoms (Vittmann 2013a, 3).

Names can provide evidence for distinction and apotheosis mainly in two ways: Firstly, the reiteration of ancestral or local names could suggest the endurance of one's fame within local social memory, or, perhaps more likely, it could indicate veneration or respect for elders, as papponymy was common already in the Old Kingdom. Secondly, numerous theophoric names from all periods of Egyptian history invoke the gods, including the deified dead. Baines looks to these examples as evidence of "early piety" (Baines 1986, 34-35). I agree with Baines that these theophoric names are productive communicators of divine commemoration and worship. Because the structuring of these names were formulaic and unique from endophoric name patterns throughout the Old and Middle Kingdoms, when private names are discovered in these constructions, in the place reserved for the god's name, it indicates a perceived divine attribution (Vittmann 2013b, 7).

This discussion of onomastics is not meant to be exhaustive, but, instead, intends to establish some of general trends in the construction of these name types. Vittmann (2013b, 3-4) identifies eight of the most common theophoric name patterns (with NN being a personal name and DN being a divine name)<sup>14</sup>: (1) NN belongs to DN, *n(i)*-DN, ex. *N(i)-Pth*; (2) Servant<sup>15</sup> of DN, *hm*-DN, ex. *Hm-R<sup>c</sup>*; (3) Beloved or Praised by DN, *mri/hsi*-DN, ex. *Hsi-R<sup>c</sup>*; (4) Protected or saved by DN, *n<sup>h</sup>m/hwi/hkz/šd-s/sw/n*-DN, ex. *N<sup>h</sup>m-s(w)-zst*; (5) Gifted/Given by DN, *Ddw/Ddt*-DN, ex. *Ddt-Mwt*; (6) Son/Daughter of DN, *z3/z3t*-DN, ex. *Z3-Sbk* or *Z3t-Gmn(i)*; (7) Made by DN, *ir.n*-DN, ex. *Ir.n-R<sup>c</sup>*; (8) One kept alive by DN, *s<sup>c</sup>nh-wi*-DN, ex. *S<sup>c</sup>nh-wi-Pth*. Additionally, in the Middle Kingdom use of divine names as personal names is securely attested; for example, personal, non-royal

<sup>14</sup> Note that the formulae and examples provided here are only those that are relevant to the Old through Middle Kingdoms. Subtle variations exist in later periods. See Vittmann (2013b) for a full discussion.

<sup>15</sup> Originally *hm*, but later also *b3k*

names could even include non-local gods, such as Isis, Ra, or Horus (Vittmann 2013b, 4). Thus, instances from the Middle Kingdom in which non-relatives use the name of the beings discussed in this study, could, unlike their Old Kingdom counterparts, also be included as potential evidence for a deified status. Vittmann also includes a discussion of various other theophoric name constructions that express an attitude or action of a god: e.g. DN-comes (DN-*iw*), or DN-is content (DN-*hṭp*). The common name DN-*m-ḥꜣt* could also be included in this group (e.g. *Imn-m-ḥꜣt*). Prior to the New Kingdom, the first element in this name pattern is exclusively, except in a single instance, reserved for a divine name (Ranke 1935, I 430). The only instance in which this first element is not a god's name is noted by Ranke as being an outlier: *kꜣ-m-ḥꜣt* (Ranke 1935, I 430, n.1). The name *kꜣ-m-ḥꜣt* dates to the Old Kingdom and was discovered at Giza; although a god does not take this first position, notably a supernatural quality does (Hassan 1936). Despite this single outlier, the name construction is incredibly common, and consistently invokes a god in this first position; thus, it will provide persuasive evidence of apotheosis. The specific attestations of theophoric names that can be used as evidence of the apotheosis of Mehu, Kagemni, Isi, and Wahka will be supplied in subsequent chapters.

### **Chapter 1.3: Outline**

The principal goal of this study is to collate and interpret the evidence for apotheosis in the Old through Middle Kingdoms in order to better understand its historic origins and its role within ancient Egypt's socio-religious landscape. To this end, the present study is divided into four main chapters, followed by a short conclusory

discussion. Chapter Two will detail what I have referred to as the “average” dead. These average deceased are elite dead who partook in average or quotidian living-dead interactions. The chapter briefly discusses the supernatural aspects that defined the self in ancient Egypt, before concluding that the *akh* (*ꜥḥ*)<sup>16</sup> was the primary social agent of the dead, with whom the living predominantly communicated. After establishing this baseline for comparison, I am then able to emphasize the points in which distinguished and deified dead departed from this expected decorum.

Chapter Three presents evidence for apotheosis which occurred in the Old Kingdom. Specifically, it presents the cases of Djedi, Mehu, and Kagemni. Several commonalities are observable among these three cases. Apotheosis at this time seems to have been limited to the region near the capital and was tied to changing roles of the king during the Sixth Dynasty, late Old Kingdom. Chapter Four, similarly, presents evidence for apotheosis which occurred during the Middle Kingdom. This section discusses the better-known cases of Heqaib and Isi, and the rarely discussed case of Wahka of Qau el-Kebir. These instances of apotheosis occurred in the provinces, rather than nearby the capital, and were tied to shifting mechanisms of local power, accelerated by the onset of the Middle Kingdom.

After providing a baseline of “average” living-dead interactions and presenting the most fully articulated examples of apotheosis in Chapters Three and Four, Chapter Five addresses the cases that fall somewhere in between these two extremes—what I refer to as “distinguished” dead. Specifically, Chapter Five suggests—through an analysis of the cases of Ptahhotep, Hordjedef, and the governors of ‘Ain Asil—that similar

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<sup>16</sup> The terms *akh* (*ꜥḥ*), *ka* (*kꜥ*), and *ba* (*bꜥ*) are now so often written in Egyptological literature in their vocalized forms, that these orthographies have become common form. Therefore, I will follow suit, but will retain transliteration for all other Egyptian words.

practices associated with apotheosis were being utilized to distinguish certain dead as “above-average,” though not quite divine. These beings are included in this study because the ancient contexts, associated practices, social display, and historical impetuses for both distinction and apotheosis were related and belong in dialogue. Finally, Chapter Six will situate the phenomenon of apotheosis within the socio-religious landscape of ancient Egypt, elaborating on how these categories of beings fit into this larger schema. In this final conclusion section, I historicize apotheosis, and show that it grew out of local webs of meaning that initially developed at the end of the Old Kingdom, which were informed by changing roles of the king, a shift towards regional power structures, and an expansion of decorum. The deified dead are intrinsically tied to the “local,” and are only reconfigured into the national pantheon in the Middle Kingdom, when royal initiatives intervened in local temple cult.



## **CHAPTER TWO:** **THE “AVERAGE” (NON-DEIFIED) DEAD**

The dead in ancient Egypt remained very much alive as active members of social systems. Indeed, to paraphrase Pyramid Text 213, they did not go away dead, but went away alive. Despite their corporeal demise, the dead lived on in various states and through certain relationships: *ba* (*bꜣ*), *ka* (*kꜣ*), *akh* (*ꜣḫ*), *m(w)t*, and *imꜣḫ.w* (*inter alia*). Mortuary culture in ancient Egypt included practices of real and symbolic offerings to the dead so that they could “live” in the afterlife. The primary locus of this engagement was (seemingly) the tomb, but this may be a product of surviving evidence. By the New Kingdom, and likely earlier, this practice was also situated within settlements and temples.<sup>17</sup> In order to understand the phenomenon of apotheosis, the “average”<sup>18</sup> dead must also be understood in order to better identify terminology, cult practices, and modes of engagement that distinguish certain dead as divergent from this decorum, and potentially deified.

The dead varied greatly in their efficacy and were venerated by their living descendants as ancestors, by local communities as powerful, effective dead

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<sup>17</sup> For New Kingdom examples of household cult of the dead see: Keith 2011; Stevens 2006; Demarée 1983.

<sup>18</sup> Hereafter I will refer to the “average” dead without the use of quotation marks. However, in use of this phrase I still retain the notion asserted by these original quotes—mainly that the term “average” is problematic and suggests a single normative mode of living-dead interaction. In reality, though, much of our evidence for the “average” dead is anything but average; instead it primarily comes from elite contexts that invariably skew our interpretations of these practices, as they would have related to truly “average” status ancient Egyptians. For this thesis, though, anyone whose cult had the potential for deification was already part of an elite group, and so these “average” living-dead interactions would have, in fact, been the expected norm for these individuals.

(“distinguished” dead), and some were even worshiped as gods. In order to identify instances in which the dead were invoked as “above-average,” distinguished or deified beings, the average dead must first be understood. Only after this baseline is approximated, can non-traditional engagement be identified. Fortunately, recent studies have outlined well the primary, average modes of living-dead interactions, notably: Nicola Harrington’s *Living with the Dead: Ancestor Worship and Mortuary Ritual in Ancient Egypt* (2013) and Clare Plater’s 2001 Liverpool dissertation, *Aspects of Interactions Between the Living and the Dead in Ancient Egypt*. While Harrington’s 2013 monograph provides a comprehensive outline of the major modes of living-dead interactions, it largely focuses on the New Kingdom. This chapter, alternatively, will focus on evidence from the Old through Middle Kingdoms that may illuminate our understanding of the average dead, in order to establish a comparative study to which the following investigation of apotheosis will be anchored.

This chapter’s first section (§2.1) will analyze the ancient Egyptian terms used to describe the dead and the numerous states and relationships possessed by the average dead. Since the goal of this thesis is to better understand the nature of engagement with divinized dead, I am most interested in the display and conceptions of average dead as (1) a comparative hermeneutic and (2) as potentially being part of the same ideological spectrum. The second section of this chapter (§2.2) will investigate the *akh* in detail, as it is the only aspect of the dead (as will be shown below) that explicitly engages with the living and is, thus, the best comparative focus. Underlying this examination of terminology of the dead is the larger research goal of addressing why some dead are

marked as distinct from average dead (specifically the *akh*) and how these markers communicate distinguished and divine statuses.

### ***The Evidence***

Because the larger scope of this dissertation is limited to the historic periods of the Old through Middle Kingdoms, the source material for reconstructing average living-dead interactions will also be limited to these periods. Additionally, this section is concerned only with interactions between the living and the non-royal, private dead. Interactions between the living and divinized deceased kings are not considered here. Posthumous cults to deified kings are common due to the divine status of kings during life. Royal cults surrounding dead kings have been the topic of a number of studies (Černý 1927; Hollender 2009; von Lieven 2001)—notably, one of the three chapters of Wildung’s 1977 *Egyptian Saints: Deification in Pharaonic Egypt* is, in fact, dedicated to deified kings. The divine royal cult should be considered separately from the cults of deified dead. It is misleading to analyze the practices involved in the continued deification of these royals alongside private instances of apotheosis in which a non-royal, upon death, is divinized (a potential complication of this is Hordjedef, *vide infra* §5.1).

This chapter is, in essence, a discussion of terminology and thus texts are the most productive sources for inquiry and comprise the majority of the evidence. Additionally, since this chapter is concerned with private, non-royal dead the discussion will focus on texts originating in private, non-royal contexts: the Coffin Texts and two corpora known as Letters to the Dead and Appeals to the Living. The Pyramid Texts will also be considered, though their supposed restricted use within royal contexts complicates their

utility. While this corpus may not be applied wholesale to the private context, evidence suggests that the royal and non-royal afterlife were intimately related and some, such as Mattheiu and Smith, have decisively shown that the Pyramid Texts and Coffin Texts were part of the same literary tradition (Mathieu 2004; Smith 2009a, 5). Allen has also suggested, based on textual parallels between royal and non-royal mortuary texts, which place private individuals alongside the “celestial regions” of the king, that at least by the end of the Old Kingdom the distinctions between royal and non-royal afterlives begin to disappear (2006, 9). Additionally, recent scholarship into private iconographic inscriptions of the Old Kingdom suggests that there may have existed a private oral tradition in which the Pyramid Texts (or similar spells) were performed (Smith 2009a, 10). Allen similarly suggests that, at least by the Fifth Dynasty, we see parallels in funerary texts that confirm private participation in an afterlife comparable to the king’s (Allen 2006, 9). This would suggest that the Pyramid Texts could, in fact, be a complementary source aiding in the reconstruction of private funerary traditions of the Old Kingdom.

Importantly this shift is occurring during the Fifth and Sixth Dynasties. As will be elaborated below (see §6), it is in the Sixth Dynasty that a fundamental shift in the king’s centrality and exclusive control, over both access to the full benefits of the divine Hereafter and one’s ability to display this access, is observed. Allen explains that by the end of the Old Kingdom “the distinction in these two views of the afterlife was probably one of focus rather than privilege. The king’s destiny reflects the higher plane of existence he occupied during life: by its very nature, it presupposes daily communion with the gods. In the same manner, the non-royal afterlife reflects the more ‘down-to-

earth' existence of the king's subjects: they belong more to the world of people than to that of the gods" (Allen 2006, 9). Allen here is speaking of what I have termed the "average" dead, who belong more to the world of people. Evidence such as Letters to the Dead and invocations of the dead in formulae reserved for gods suggests, though, that not all dead were created equal. Some dead were able to transcend these spheres with greater ease, and were able to attain a higher status among the gods—in some instances becoming some form of divine actor themselves. Thus at the root of this study, this chapter will first present the components and qualities of the average dead as a baseline for the further investigations to be found in subsequent chapters.

## **2.1 Terminology of the Dead: components and states of the individual in death**

Living individuals in ancient Egypt possessed five discrete components – *ba*, *ka*, name (*rn*), body (*ḏt*), and shadow (*šwt*) (Frankfort 1948, 61). In death, these elements were ideally retained to allow for eternal life. The process of death, though, irreversibly transfigured the dead, altering the forms and abilities of these components, while introducing a number of new potential states of existence free from earthly constraints. The body became the corpse (*ḥꜣt*), or mummy (*sꜥḥ*), located ideally within the tomb where the name was also preserved in inscriptions. Upon death, the *ka* was anchored to a *ka*-statue, mummy, or images of the deceased within his tomb, while the *ba* was free to roam the sky among the gods. The dead could also become *akh* either through *sꜣḥ.w* rites of transfiguration (Bonnet 1952; Kees 1956; Otto 1942) or, as suggested by Pirenne (1959), via the reunification of the *ba* and *ka* after death and interment. The *ba*, *ka*, and *akh* can be generally described as supernatural aspects or qualities of the dead. The dead

were additionally described or referred to by a number of other terms: *m(w)t* (the dead), *imꜣḥ* (a venerated one), *ḥfty* (an opponent).

## 2.1a: *ba*

Although not only humans but also animals and objects (such as doors and threshing floors) could possess a *ba*, scholarship has largely focused on the *ba*-concept as it relates to humans (Žabkar 1968, 48). The most extensive study of the *ba* is still Žabkar’s 1968 monograph, *A study of the ba concept in ancient Egyptian texts*. Žabkar rejects the common hypothesis that the *ba* is a spiritual aspect of the self in death—instead he argues that the *ba* is the self in its entirety, rather than a component of it, a assertion echoed by Smith (Žabkar 1968, 116-8; Smith 2009b, 4). He also argues that the *ba* exists only upon death (*cf.* Otto 1941; Allen 2011) and is not part of the living individual, but rather is the “alter ego of the deceased” (Žabkar 1968, 117). Allen’s recent translation, though, of “A Debate Between a Man and His Soul” has convincingly shown that the *ba*, by the Middle Kingdom, was conceptualized as part of the self during life, residing in the belly (Allen 2011, 137-41; *cf.* Mathieu 2000).<sup>19</sup> Frankfort similarly suggests that the *ba* is “entirely personal” as it “represents man as animated notwithstanding the death of the body; [the *ba*] preserves man’s identity through its lasting relationship with mummy or statue but is free from the limitations of either” (Frankfort 1948, 64). The *ba* does, indeed, seem personal. It is the non-physical personal, individual quality of the self both in life and in death.

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<sup>19</sup> From Allen 2011, lines 8-9: *nn dj.t ḥꜣ.f wj dr ntt.f m ḥt.j m šnw nwh* “[My *ba*] will not be allowed to resist me, since he is in my belly in a rope mesh”

The plural of *ba*, *bau*, can be translated as “*bas*” or “impressiveness.” Both *ba* and *bau* can refer to a god’s impression or personality manifest upon earth either as a tangible object, in a cult statue, as another god, or the dead. The “*bau* of Re,” for example is understood to refer to religious texts, or sacred writings. The *bau* of Heliopolis are Re, Shu, and Tefnut, though Re is also referred to as the *ba* of Nun just as Amun-Re is the august *ba* of Osiris (Žabkar 1968, 10-12). Similarly, in the Coffin Texts, we see the dead identifying as the *ba* of Shu.<sup>20</sup> Shu as air can move seemingly without restrictions, like the *ba*-bird motif common in the New Kingdom.

Despite the imagery of a free flying bird, Assmann sees the *ba* as intrinsically tied to the physical self—the body in life and the corpse in death (Assmann 2005, 89). He notes the focus in funerary literature on the *ba*’s interdependence with the physical body, first in its separation from the corpse upon death and then with its eventual return to the body after mummification and internment (Assmann 2005, 95; Žabkar 1968, 108-9). An Eighteenth Dynasty statuette (CG 48483) of a mummy whose *ba*, in the form of a human-headed bird, rests his arms upon a sarcophagus, similarly invokes this notion. Thus, the *ba*, although possessing the superhuman ability of flight, is still anchored to the corpse. Anchored to the corpse and earth, but also endowed with a great range in mobility as the *ba* is able to change forms, travel to the sky, etc. Indeed, this mobility, Smith suggests, “was one of the most salient characteristics of this aspect of an individual” (Smith 2009b, 5).

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<sup>20</sup> e.g. CT 80: “I am the *ba* of Shu at the front of the great flood, who goes up to the sky as he desires, who goes down to the earth as his will decides”

## 2.1b: *ka*

Assmann aptly acknowledges the complexity of the notion of *ka* when he writes, “a great deal, much of it contradictory, has been written about the *ka*” (Assmann 2005, 96). The *ka* as a concept is not yet fully understood, and this section will not arrive at a neat explanation, but rather will complicate the conversation further. Though I will indulge here briefly, for the sake of this dissertation the notion of the *ka* is not central and, thus, I will not try to surmise any sort of definitive definition.<sup>21</sup> Instead, I hope to bring to the fore some questions about current interpretations, which are to be fodder for further investigations elsewhere.

The *ka* can be translated as life-force (*Lebenseele*). While Assmann sees the *ba* as intimately tied to the body, he argues that the “*ka* had nothing to do with the corpse; it was not part of the ‘physical sphere’ of the individual” (Assmann 2005, 96). I would suggest, though, that there is a relationship between the *ka* and the body as seen in Pyr. 37c: “As everything belongs to your body, may everything belong to the *ka* of Unas.” Evidence from tombs also suggests that the *ka* could animate images or funerary statues. This is best exemplified by the Sixth Dynasty protruding bust of Idu, carved into his false door at his tomb in Giza (G7102), whose extended arms produce the hieroglyph *k3* (Simpson 1976). The extended arms mark the bust explicitly as a *ka*-activated carving, similar to the Thirteenth Dynasty wood statue of Hor with *ka*-arms fixed atop the statue’s head (Morgan 1985, 91-2).

Though Assmann disagrees with the argument that the *ka* was dependent upon a body or image (2005), this dependence would actually align well with his evaluation of

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<sup>21</sup> Part of the difficulty in understanding the *ka* in modern terms is that ancient Egyptians philosophy was largely implicit. For more on implicit and explicit theology, see Assmann 2001.



divine presence: cultic/local, cosmic, mythic/verbal (Assmann 2001, 8). If the three dimensions of divine presence are applied to the realm of the dead, we see a one-to-one correlation between dimensions of presence and supernatural aspects of the dead.

Assmann describes the local or cultic dimension as one in which the gods are resident upon earth—typically within a cult statue or image within the temple. The gods also, though, reside in the sky in their cosmic presence. Finally, the gods, Assmann argues, possess a verbal or mythic dimension of presence; this dimension emphasizes the gods' power made efficacious through names, sacred words, and sacred knowledge and in particular the *sꜥḥw* spells. Applied to the dead, the *ka* is the manifestation (dimension) of the dead's local/cultic presence resident in a funerary statue or image, the *ba* is the dead's cosmic presence, and the *akh* is the dead's mythic presence as possessor of knowledge and spells.

Whether or not the *ka* is anchored to a bodily form, scholars agree that the *ka* indubitably exists as part of the living self and is possessed only by humans, gods, and certain animated statues. There are no known texts in which an animal or inanimate object is described as having a *ka* (unlike the *ba*). This suggests that the *ka* may not only mean “life-force,” but also, perhaps, something akin to self-consciousness (Allen, personal correspondence 2013). Smith further suggests that the *ka* was inherently familial and connected one to their ancestors and descendants (Smith 2009b, 6). The concept of *ka* is also related to nourishment, illustrated by the use of the abstract term *kau* to mean food, or sustenance. Frankfort connects the Egyptian *ka* to the Roman concept of *genius*, though the Egyptian *ka* is more impersonal than its Classical counterpart (Frankfort 1948, 65). Assmann, though, sees the *ka* as “the vehicle of vindication that restored the

individual's status as a social person" (Assmann 2005, 97). While Assmann associates the *ba* with the physical self, he associates the *ka* with the social self (Assmann 2005, 89). I find this interpretation less convincing, though, *vis-à-vis* the evidence for the *akh* as the primary social agent of the dead (*vide infra*, especially §2.2b)—though, admittedly, they are not necessarily mutually exclusive suggestions. The *ka* is described as being gifted by either the gods or the king, and from fathers to their sons through an embrace. This image of a *ka*-embrace is made explicit in PT 600: "Oh, Atum...you sneezed Shu and spat Tefnut, you put your arms around them as *ka*-arms so that your *ka* might be in them." Unfortunately, our understanding of the *ka* of non-royals is limited by the complete lack of explicit depiction of a *ka* other than the royal *ka* (Frankfort 1984, 69).<sup>22</sup>

### 2.1c: *akh*

*Akh* is commonly (mis-)translated as "soul" or "spirit," as one of three supernatural aspects of the self along with the *ba* and *ka*. The *akh* has been the subject of numerous studies: Gertie Englund (1978), Florence Friedman (1981, 1984, 1985), Karl Jansen-Winkel (1996) and, most recently, Jiří Janák's 2013 UCLA Online Encyclopedia of Egyptology article. Scholars still disagree on the exact definition and use of the verb *akh*, while others disagree as to the exact socio-religious role of the (noun) *akh*. Scholars have argued primarily between two definitions of *akh*: "to be effective" or "to be luminous," with scholarship now leaning towards the former (Friedman 1984; Janák 2013). Janák, though, has aptly argued that any single definition is too limited in scope to fully translate the emic meaning of the concept (Janák 2013). Use of the noun and verb

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<sup>22</sup> This is likely a factor of decorum. Though this explanation feels unsatisfactory, I have no other.

*akh* (referring both to the supernatural entity and the act of being or becoming effective) falls into two literary categories of texts: administrative and mortuary. Gertie Englund (1978) argues that the administrative definition of *akh*, relating to effectiveness, could not be applied to the meaning of *akh* in mortuary texts. Florence Friedman's 1981 dissertation (and subsequent articles), however, rather (more) convincingly suggests that the fundamental meaning of *akh* in mortuary texts—that is, the Pyramid Texts, Coffin Texts, and Book of Going Forth by Day—is, indeed, “effectiveness.” She proposes that the solar/light association of *akh* is an evolution of its base meaning of effectiveness. Jansen-Winkeln (1996) sees a connection between the *akh* and the invisible efficacy of the sun in the *akhet*. He suggests that the sun's passing through the *akhet*, “the place of *akhification*,” parallels the dead's journey in that the *akhet* is, similarly, the place in which the dead becomes effective, or *akh*. Nicola Harrington sees the *akh* primarily in a social capacity: “The *akh* was not so much an element of the deceased as the transfigured deceased in his entirety who had attained the status of an ancestor, was able to communicate with the living, and appeared before them in corporeal form” ((Harrington 2013, 7). Supporting this assertion is Book of the Dead spell 64, which states “I have come forth as *ꜥḫ-ḫꜥ*, I am seen in my human form” (Harrington 2013, 9). Janák similarly stresses the relational status of the *akh*—the *akh* is only effective in its reciprocal relationships with the living, or in its role as mediator or, as termed by Janák, “*akhtaché*” (Janák 2013, 4). I tend to agree with Harrington's and Janák's interpretations of the *akh* as both social and inherently relational. Because this interpretation is central to this thesis, the evidence will be elucidated below (*vide infra* §2.2a-f).

Additionally, *akh* can also be associated with magic (*heka*). Nominally, the word

*ꜣḥ.w* can be translated as “effective things” or “spells,” in that they are words and acts that possess efficacy. In this way, *akh* really refers to the state of being able to affect change, to make things happen (*cf. heka*, which is the non-physical force that produces the change). It is through the creator god’s effectiveness (*ꜣḥ.w*), for example, that creation is possible. Coffin Text spell 714 tells us that it is through Atum’s effectiveness that he made his members evolve. The *akh*, then, as a spiritual incarnation, is an effective being.

### 2.1d: Other Terms: *m(w)t*, *imꜣḥ.w*, *ḥfty*

Unlike the previously discussed terms (*ba*, *ka*, *akh*), which can be described as states or aspects of the dead and are similarly translated as “soul,” the terms discussed here are not unique to the individual but refer to the dead more generally and are less disputed. The term *mt*, more fully *mwt*, is the most general term for the dead, translated simply as “the dead” or, when used as a verb, “to be dead” or “to die.” Some, notably Kaplony and H. te Velde, have suggested that *m(w)t* refers to the harmful dead, as opposed to the beneficial dead, or *ꜣḥ.w* (Kaplony “Totengeist” in LÄ VI, 648-656; H. te Velde “Dämonen” in LÄ I, 980-84). It is clear from evidence presented below (*vide infra* §2.2c) that the *akh* possessed an explicit capacity for harm. The *ḥfty.w*, or “opponents,” may refer to the dead in some instances, but not universally.<sup>23</sup> Coffin Text Spell 37, for instance, refers specifically to a *ḥfty* who exists dually among men and in the necropolis suggesting opponents can be, or at least affect, the living and the dead.

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<sup>23</sup> What is of particular interest here is the fact that these terms do not solely refer to the dead. In fact these terms, *imꜣḥ* and *ḥfty*, are social terms, applied to the dead in their social capacities.

The term *jmꜣḥ* refers to a state of being or quality of the dead as an “honored one,” “revered one,” or “favored one” (Garnot 1941, 10). The dead are most often identified as being *imꜣḥ*, described as being *imꜣḥ* for or by (*ḥr*) someone, or categorized as existing among or with the netherworld collective, the *imꜣḥ.w*. To be *imꜣḥ* in death, in essence, means the dead partakes in a relationship—typically with the king or a god—which is founded upon the dead’s social worth to a higher power (be it terrestrial or supernatural). In a funerary context, this worth is meant to justify one’s admittance into the afterlife. A full discussion of this term and its associated *imꜣḥ.w ḥr* formula can be found in the introduction, with particular reference to how it can be used to identify distinguished dead (§1.2a).

## 2.2 The *akh* as the active agent of the dead

The *akh* is the predominantly invoked aspect of the average dead during the Old through Middle Kingdoms. Furthermore, the *akh* is the active agent of the dead who can act as mediator or intermediary between the divine hereafter and the earthly realm. The *akh* is also, importantly, a social actor co-existing with the living within dynamic social networks. Indeed, Harrington suggests, and I concur, “the only aspect of the deceased able to communicate directly with the living was the *akh*” (Harrington 2013, 7). Thus, it is worthwhile here to address in detail the nature of the *akh* in order to establish the foundation for further comparative analysis with average dead. Subsequent chapters will present and interpret evidence of dead who diverge from average descriptions and roles, which may suggest processes and levels of distinction. My interpretations of the *akh* aspect of private (non-royal) persons is formed primarily through analysis of Coffin

Texts, false door stelae, the so-called Letters to the Dead, and Appeals to the Living. This chapter will, thus, address each of these corpora separately in sub-sections, followed by a short discussion of the associated terms *ꜣḫ-ikr* and *ꜣḫ-pr*, followed by a concluding analysis.

## **2.2a: The *akh* in the Pyramid and Coffin Texts**

The earliest, definite attestations of the word *akh* are known from the Pyramid Texts (a justification for using the Pyramid Texts is presented above).<sup>24</sup> The *akh*'s agency is described in the Pyramid Texts as existing among the dead, the gods, and the living. Its agency in the divine hereafter is illustrated in Pyramid Text 135: "How content is your situation, as you become *akh*, Unas, among your brothers—the gods." Similarly in Pyramid Text 210 we read, "*akh* to the sky, corpse to the earth" with the assumption here, being that the "sky" is the place of the gods. As a corollary, the *akh* is seen as effective on earth in Pyramid Text spell 170: "Now that Unas has emerged today in the true form of a living *akh*, Unas may break up fighting and restrain commotion." Upon death, it is only after evolving into a living *akh* that Unas is able to possess efficacy in the earthly realm—"breaking up" and "restraining." The Pyramid Texts thus present the *akh* as an eternal supplement to the living human. While the body expires, the dead lives on as an active member of social interactions, existing within a liminal zone engaging with the gods, the dead, and the living.

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<sup>24</sup> There are earlier known images on First Dynasty cylinder seals and Second Dynasty funerary stelae, which are likely the *akh* in ibis and possibly human form seated before offering tables (Friedman 1985, 86). This will be further addressed below in §2.2b.

According to the Coffin Text Word Index (Borghouts & von der Plas 1998, 3-4), the *akh* is mentioned in 374 spells (to clarify, that is the number of spells, not times mentioned—there are many spells in which the *akh* is invoked more than once). Additionally, the *akh* is invoked in approximately 40 Middle Kingdom copies of Pyramid Texts (Allen 2006). In these instances, though, *akh* is used either as a verb, as a noun without an adjective, or if an adjective is present, it is always the phrase “imperishable (*jhm sk*) *akh*.” Of the 374 spells invoking the *akh*, there are 51 instances in which the term *akh* is modified by an adjective, and of those 51 instances 44 spells utilize the phrase “equipped *akh*” (*ꜥh-pr*) expressing a clear favoring of the terms *akh* and *ꜥh-pr* when invoking the active aspect of the dead. This inequity in distribution is explained by considering the purpose of the Coffin Texts—to protect and guide the dead’s transition into the divine hereafter. The deceased thus presents himself as both efficacious and equipped with proper funerary equipment and the necessary knowledge to transcend realms.

## **2.2b: The *akh* in False Door Stelae**

The tomb chapel is one of the primary loci for the presentation of offerings to the dead. Within these chapels there is a false door, which acts as a liminal zone, a doorway between the realm of the living and the divine hereafter. Above these doors are stelae, often referred to as “false door stelae.” Scenes inscribed upon these stelae typically show the deceased sitting before an offering table overflowing with offerings. Sometimes family members join the deceased, and often inscriptions describe the scene. Florence Friedman has presented suggestive evidence arguing that it is the *akh* that is depicted

seated before the table of offerings upon false door stelae, and that, in fact, offerings were received by the *ka* of the *akh* (Friedman 1985).

Friedman explains that depictions of the dead before a table of offerings are known from First Dynasty cylinder seals. In these seals, the table of offerings is flanked by an image of the seated dead in human form, and by a plumed ibis—the hieroglyph for *akh* (see image: Friedman 1985, 86). By the Second Dynasty, similar images appear on funerary stelae, which eventually become canonically situated above false doors. In these images, the offering table is flanked by the deceased on one side, and on the other by an *akh* ibis, a wife, or a repeated image of the deceased. A stela of a woman from Saqqara shows her seated across from an image of herself, joined by an inscription: *ink 3ḥ ikr pr* “I am an able and equipped *akh*” (Fischer in Aldred *et al.* 1977, 172, fig.12). Although the crested ibis *akh* may not always be present, Friedman suggests, “it is possible that...the notion of the deceased as an effective and able *3ḥ* before the offering table was still operative” (Friedman 1985, 86). Other stelae explicitly identify the seated deceased as *akh* by inscriptions identifying the ritual feasting as *snmt-3ḥ*, “feeding the *akh*” (Friedman 1985, 86-7). Friedman’s final piece of evidence identifying the seated deceased recipient of funerary offerings as *akh* is Coffin Text 334e-g: “Your bread and your (morning) meal are laid on the ground to the front of your offering slab. Your *akh* is seated” (Friedman 1985, 90). The *akh*, then, is convincingly identified as the depicted seated deceased before the offering table. Friedman concludes, “the Egyptians believed that the offerings were directed to the *k3* of the *3ḥ*” (Friedman 1985, 91).

If then, we are to accept this evidence suggesting that the *akh* was the end recipient of the funerary feast and is depicted upon the false door stelae, we identify our



first locus of interaction between the living and the dead, in which the *akh* was the active agent.

### **2.2c: The *akh* in Appeals to the Living**

Appeals to the Living are found along the facades of tombs beginning in the Old Kingdom. The oldest known examples of these Appeals come from tombs of the Fifth Dynasty. There are, however, only a few (I have only been able to identify three for certain, though there are likely more) dated to the Fifth Dynasty and they are found at tombs of elites at Saqqara and Deshasheh (Shubert 2007, 16).<sup>25</sup> There is a notable increase in examples of Appeals from the Sixth Dynasty, but they also tend to be clustered in cemeteries near the capital. It is in the Sixth Dynasty that we find the earliest known example of an Appeal from outside a tomb: two stelae from Abydos with appeals are dated to this period, along with a rock inscription along the Wadi Hammamat. In the First Intermediate Period and Middle Kingdom, appeals become more widespread in the provinces and associated with specific sites, such as elite monuments at Naga ed-Deir or Abydos. There are a few hundred known appeals inscribed either upon tombs or stelae from the entirety of Egyptian history. Through an analysis of the attestations of the *akh* in these Appeals, the social role of the *akh* becomes clearer. Importantly, our understanding of the capabilities and the efficacy of the *akh* is sharpened, so that we can better understand how normative living-dead interactions and, in doing so, draw attention towards the exceptional roles and functions of the distinguished and deified dead.

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<sup>25</sup> The three appeals that are dateable to the Fifth Dynasty are: (1) From the tomb of Kaiherasetef, at Saqqara (Urk. I 10, 6-7); (2) From the tomb of the official Ti at Saqqara (Urk. I 173, 10 - 174, 8; (3) From the tomb of the nomarch Inti at Deshasheh (Urk. I 70, 11-13 and 71, 2-10).

In order to focus on the earliest attestations of *akh* in Appeals, I limited the scope of my corpus to appeals from the Old Kingdom—that is the Fifth and Sixth Dynasties (appeals from the Fifth Dynasty alone was too small of a dataset and none of them invoked the *akh*). I have identified twenty-eight examples that date to the Fifth through Sixth Dynasties.<sup>26</sup> Of these twenty-nine appeals only six date to the Fifth Dynasty;<sup>27</sup> while twenty-three date to the Sixth Dynasty.<sup>28</sup> Of the Sixth Dynasty examples two Appeals discuss rites of *akhification*,<sup>29</sup> or becoming *akh*. One Appeal identifies the tomb owner as *akh*, but does not use any adjective.<sup>30</sup> Eleven Appeals refer to the *akh* with some sort of adjective: four<sup>31</sup> use the adjective *ꜥpr* and ten<sup>32</sup> use the adjective *ikr*. There is only one instance, though, of an adjective being used to describe *akh* in which *ꜥpr* is used and *ikr* is not.<sup>33</sup> We also see for the first time the use of the phrase “*ink ꜥh-ikr-ꜥpr*” which becomes a common phrase in later texts. I suggest, then, that in those instances in which the deceased tomb owner is identified as *akh*, the phrase *ꜥh-ikr* or *ꜥh-ikr-ꜥpr* is preferred

<sup>26</sup> Note that there are more appeals than these twenty-eight, but some cannot be definitively dated or the texts are broken. Texts in which the appeal is legible, but not the rest (the part that might have invoked the *akh*) are not included since they would potentially create false statistics. See specific references that follow.

<sup>27</sup> Fifth Dynasty appeals are found upon the tomb facade unless otherwise noted: Kehersef (Urk. I, 10), Ti (Urk. I, 173-174), Inti (Urk. I, 70-71), False Door of Sekhentyuka (Schlick-Nolte 1993, 21-31), Tjetu (Simpson 1980, 8-10, figs. 12, 15-16), False Door of Pehenwikai (Urk. I, 48-49)

<sup>28</sup> Sixth Dynasty appeals are found upon the tomb façade unless otherwise noted: Lintel of Nedjimib (Cairo CG 1732), Stela of Djasu (Urk. I, 119), Stela of Nypepi (Urk. I, 112), Wadi Hammamat Rock Inscription of Shemay (Urk. I, 149-150), Nykauizezi (Kanawati and Abder-Raziq 2000, 33-34, 41, pls. 43-44, 50), Inscription of Reherytep Iti (Urk. I, 197), Meru called Bebi (Urk. I, 255-256), Offering Table Ishetmaa (James 1953, 68-69, pl. XLI; Edel 1981, 67-71), Nyhetepptah (Urk. I, 187-188), Burial Chamber of Kaikherptah (Urk. I, 186), Ankhmahor, known as Sesu (Urk. I, 201-203), Henku (Urk. I, 76-79), Nyankhpepi (Urk. I, 73), Harkhuf (Urk. I, 120-131), Ankhi, called Inti (Goyon 1959), Ankhwedja Itji (Junker 1947, 133-135), Lintel of Herymeru (Hassan 1975: III, 76-78, fig.39), Khui (Lloyd et al. 1990, 37-38, pl. 22), Khuit (Fischer 1992, 67-70), Architrave of Mehi (Edel 1994), Ty and Mereruka (Edel 1944, 56-68), Lintel of Nenki, Leipzig 359, now lost (Urk. I, 260)

<sup>29</sup> Nyhetepptah (Urk. I, 187-188) and the burial chamber of Kaikherptah (Urk. I, 186)

<sup>30</sup> Lintel of Nenki (Urk. I, 260).

<sup>31</sup> Ankhmahor, known as Sesu (Urk. I, 201-203), Henku (Urk. I, 76-79), Harkhuf (Urk. I, 120-131), and Ankhi, called Inti (Goyon 1959)

<sup>32</sup> Ankhmahor, known as Sesu (Urk. I, 201-203), Henku (Urk. I, 76-79), Nyankhpepi (Urk. I, 73), Harkhuf (Urk. I, 120-131), Ankhwedja Itji (Junker 1947, 133-135), Lintel of Herymeru (Hassan 1975: III, 76-78, fig.39), Khui (Lloyd et al. 1990, 37-38, pl. 22), Khuit (Fischer 1992, 67-70), Architrave of Mehi (Edel 1994), and Ty and Mereruka (Edel 1944, 56-68)

<sup>33</sup> Ankhi, called Inti (Goyon 1959)

over *ꜣḥ-ꜥpr*. When both adjectives are used, *ikr* is always listed first, mirroring this favoritism. This trend is supported when looking at tomb biographies more generally. Seventeen tomb biographies of this period can be identified in which the tomb owner identifies him (or her) self explicitly as *akh*. In all but one instance the tomb owner is called *ꜣḥ-ikr* or *ꜣḥ-ikr-ꜥpr*.

Appeals to the Living perform two major functions: request of invocation offerings and warnings or threats. While it is generally accepted that these inscriptions invoke the living on behalf of the dead, the specific aspect of the dead making these requests or threats is indeed the *akh*. I will first present evidence that the *akh* is requesting offerings and then discuss the evidence that suggests the *akh* is also the actor warning or threatening the living.

Along with the biographies of the tomb owner, the Appeals to the Living call upon passers-by and encourage them to present offerings to the deceased because of his good deeds during life. Often this appeal will also present the passers-by with a promise of aid or protection—typically within the necropolis. From these appeals, it is apparent that the *akh* is indeed effective among the dead and has influence in the divine tribunal and in the realm of the necropolis.

An Appeal that clearly illustrates the *akh*'s role as agent in the request for invocation offerings is found in the Cairo Text (JE 44608) of Ankhmeryremeryptah called Nekhebu from Giza during the reign of Sixth Dynasty King Pepi I (Urk. I, 218, 1-5):

*You shall make invocation offerings like that which I did for your fathers [////], since you have wished that I interceded for you in the necropolis. You shall demonstrate for your children, on the day of passing there, the words of the invocation offering for me. I am an ꜣḥ-ikr.*

The identification of the active agent of the dead as the *akh* is further emphasized in the Tomb of Hezi at Saqqara during the early Sixth Dynasty (Strudwick 2005, 275)<sup>34</sup>:

*Anyone who shall enter this tomb...I am a more effective (iḳr) akh than any other. I am a more prepared (ḥpr) akh than any other. I know all that which is iḳr; for an akh is iḳr, and what is potent, for an akh which is in the necropolis is iḳr ...so that invocation offerings may be made in [the tomb].*

The dynamic relationship, which in effect seems to be a sort of social contract between the living and dead to provide offerings in return for protection or aid, is best illustrated upon the tomb of Harkhuf at Qubbet el-Hawa, also dating to the Sixth Dynasty (Urk. I, 122, 9-13):

*Oh living ones who are upon earth...may they say “1000 bread and beer” for the owner of this tomb. Then I will watch over them in the necropolis. I am an ḥi-iḳr-ḥpr, a lector priest who knows his spells.*

This Appeal to the Living, expressed by the *akh* of Harkhuf, suggests that an expectation existed wherein offerings were supplied in exchange for supernatural aid. The *akh*'s efficacy was not limited to the necropolis, however, as is shown in an inscription from the tomb of Akhetmehu at Giza (G 2375), dating to the Sixth Dynasty, which proclaims (Edel 1953, 333):

*The one who will make invocation offerings for me in a pure state...I will be his support in the tribunal of the noble ancestors.*

The *akh* is, thus, effective in the tribunal of the divine Hereafter in addition to the necropolis, or realm of the dead on earth. More generally, Pepyankhheryib's tomb at Meir illustrates that this social expectation was broader than invocation offerings; indeed, in an Appeal to the Living he writes (Urk. I, 224, 4-8)

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<sup>34</sup> Based on Kanawati and Abder-Raziq 1999: 22–23, 37–38, pls. 52, 59

*Concerning those who act in accordance with that which I have said - It shall be done as that which they desire, for I am an akh who is more equipped (ꜥpr) than others who have evolved before.*

What is perhaps most intriguing here is that these appeals are not directed at familial descendants, but rather any living person on earth who passes by the tomb and does what the tomb owner has requested may benefit through the *akh*'s efficacy among the dead and within the divine Hereafter.

As a corollary, anyone who does not act in accordance with the tomb owner's requests may be victim to the wrath of his *akh*. This is the Appeals' second function; they may be a warning or threat against those who enter the tomb to disturb it (Morschauser 1991). The Appeals establish the *akh* as an effective being amongst the living. The actor of the dead, the aspect that is to intervene and cause harm amongst the living, is clearly the *akh*. Similarly, an Appeal from the tomb of Ibi from Deir el Gebrawi proclaims (Urk. I, 142, 15–145, 2):

*Concerning anyone who will enter this tomb being [impure] – I shall seize [his neck] like a bird's, I am an ȝh-ikr-ꜥpr. I know all of the secret magic of the Residence.*

An Appeal found upon the tomb of Ankhmahor at Saqqara suggests that the *akh* in addition to seizing necks, could inspire fear and be seen (Urk. I, 202, 6-):

*[I shall seize him] like a bird and place fear in him so that the ȝh.w and those on earth will see and they will fear an ȝh-ikr.*

In these appeals to the living, it is clear that the *akh* is the active agent of the dead. Indeed, social expectations continued to exist for the average dead in ancient Egypt. These interactions can broadly be described as social contracts in which the living provided offerings in return for aid, or the living disturbed the tomb-house of the dead, who in turn would seek vengeance through neck seizing and the installation of fear in the living.

## 2.2d: The *akh* in Letters to the Dead

The corpus of texts known as the “Letters to the Dead” also make explicit this social contract between the living and the dead referenced above. In many ways the letters to the dead are in conversation with the appeals and warnings to the living. In one, the dead threatens and requests help of the living; in the other, the living threatens and requests help of the dead, as part of a larger socio-religious network based on expected reciprocal action. Janák aptly comments on this mutual efficacy and suggests that it is modeled on the Horus-Osiris myth. Janák writes, “Osiris is said to have become *akh* through the deeds of his son Horus; in the same way, Horus was believed to have become *akh*-effective and was legitimized by his father Osiris” (Janák 2013, 4).<sup>35</sup> The letters to the dead are characterized by their address to the dead, their letter format, and their topic of request. Their categorization as letters is defined, initially by Gardiner and Sethe (1928), by their inclusion of the following components: address, greeting, problem, connection to dead and petition for aid. All of these components are not consistently present, but when they do occur they are found in the same order listed above. The dead are typically invoked by immediate relatives: siblings, offspring or spouses—though ubiquity of terms such as “brother” and “sister” in Egyptian letters can make it difficult to ascertain whether the invoked recipient is a true, familial sibling, a significant other, or

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<sup>35</sup> Letters to the Dead were first identified and published as a corpus by Gardiner and Sethe in 1928 (*Egyptian Letters to the Dead: mainly from the Old and Middle Kingdoms*). The most recent study is Julia Hsieh’s (Yale University) forthcoming dissertation. Hsieh’s dissertation will have a noticeable philological focus, while other scholars, notably John Baines, have engaged with the letters as texts indicating practices of popular religion (Baines 1987). Recently, a new survey of the corpus was published by Donnat Beauquier (2014).

friend. In any case, the immediacy of the invocation is significant because the petitioners are addressing the recently departed, not a far off ancestor. These appeals, therefore, are not attempts to address elder ancestors nor are they likely a manifestation of ancestor worship. Instead they seem to invoke the able, active agent of the dead—specifically the *akh*, as a pragmatic means of obtaining protection or justice for the living author.

Currently, there are 15 objects upon which 17 confirmed Letters to the Dead are written (the most recent preserved example being identified in 1992 in the Brooklyn Museum). These numbers are only to give a sense of what has been collated. Janák has shown that there is evidence for letters that have either not survived, or have yet to be discovered (Janák 2003).<sup>36</sup> They range in date from the Old Kingdom through the Late Period, being most numerous during the First Intermediate Period (see TABLE 3). The letters are inscribed or painted, typically in the hieratic script upon ceramic, papyrus, linen or limestone (see TABLE 4).

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<sup>36</sup> Gardiner and Sethe (1928) include references to the following letters: Cairo Linen (JdE 25975), Hu Bowl (UC 16244), Qau Bowl (UC 16163), Berlin Bowl (Inv. 22573), Cairo Bowl (CG 25375), Oxford Bowl (Pitt-Rivers 1887.27.1), Moscow Bowl (Moscow 3917b), and Leiden Papyrus (Leiden Papyrus 371). Published elsewhere since Gardiner and Sethe's publication are a number of additional letters: p.Naga ed-Deir N 3500 (Simpson 1970; Goedicke 1972), p.Meru Naga ed-Deir N. 3737, MFA Boston 38.2121 (Simpson 1966), Chicago Jarstand, Hashell Oriental Museum #13945 (Gardiner 1930), Wente's Stela (Wente 1975/1976), Louvre Bowl, E61634 (Piankoff and Clère 1934), Ostrakon Louvre, O.Louvre 698 (Frandsen 1992; Goldwasser 1955), and p.Brooklyn 37.1799 E (Jasnow and Vittmann 1992-3)

TABLE 3: Letters to the Dead by period		
Historical Period	# known	Letter to the Dead
Old Kingdom	2	Cairo Linen; Papyrus Naga ed-Deir N 3500
First Intermediate Period	6	Chicago Jarstand; Hu Bowl; Papyrus to Meru; Qau Bowl; Wente's Stela; Berlin Bowl
Middle Kingdom	2	Louvre Bowl; Cairo Bowl
Second Intermediate Period-New Kingdom	4	Oxford Bowl; Moscow Bowl; Leiden Papyrus; O. Louvre 698
Late Period	1	P. Brooklyn 37.1799 E

TABLE 4: Letters to the Dead by medium and form		
Medium	# known	Letter to the Dead
Ceramic	8	
bowl	7	Hu Bowl; Qau Bowl; Louvre Bowl; Berlin Bowl; Cairo Bowl; Oxford Bowl; Moscow Bowl
jarstand	1	Chicago Jarstand
Papyrus	4	Papyrus Naga ed-Deir N 3500; Papyrus to Meru; Leiden Papyrus; P. Brooklyn 37.1799 E
Linen	1	Cairo Linen
Limestone	2	
stela	1	Wente's Stela
ostracon	1	O. Louvre 698



Though the size of this corpus is noticeably small, there was likely a more commonly practiced oral tradition associated with this phenomenon. Julia Hsieh, whose research focused on this corpus, has proposed that the diction of the letters to the dead reflects spoken speech more than literary texts (personal correspondence, May 2012). This suggests that the Letters to the Dead reflect an oral tradition as much as a textual one; they were likely meant to have been spoken, in addition to being deposited. Indeed, John Baines also suggests that the letters were meant to be spoken (Baines 1991, 153-55). The most convincing evidence of the letters' oral nature comes from a Late Period letter to the dead, P.Brooklyn 37.1799 E. The body of the letter is written upon the recto side of a piece of papyrus. Upon the verso side is written: "Hersaisset, son of Tenhem, son of Nakhttamut [...?...] recite it before him at the tomb of Tenhem" (Jasnow and Vittmann 1992-3, 27). This clearly records the recitation of the letter at the tomb of the intended recipient. This negates the necessity of the recipient being literate. The letter, then, acted as a contract ensuring the continuity of the arrangements and promises negotiated in the text.

The Qau Bowl (UC 16163) is the only Letter with a precise provenance: behind the head of a man in Qau Tomb 7695. Upon the bowl are two letters addressed to the author's father and mother respectively. The excavator of the tomb, Brunton, has showed that the tomb was not disturbed after burial, and that there would not have been space for a second body—that of the mother (Brunton 1927, 37). Additionally, the name of the tomb owner remains unknown. Because letters to the dead were intended, typically, for elite members of the community or family, it seems incongruous that someone worthy of a letter to the dead would not have had the means to ensure the survival of his name.

Thus, this letter to the dead was likely deposited in the most accessible tomb, regardless of its owner, because the act of entombment—next to the skull of the deceased—would ensure its travel to the Hereafter. A second example corroborates this conclusion; the letter to the dead known as the Papyrus to Meru was recovered from a pit in the courtyard of the tomb of Meru (Naga ed-Deir Tomb N.3737 in Cemetery N.3500). Though the *akh* could travel within the earthly realm, the tomb was its home and primary residence and, thus, the most effective space to engage with the dead. Depositing the letter, in fact burying it, nearby the tomb was enough to symbolically carry it into the liminal world of the dead, making it accessible to the intended recipient.

The recipient of the letter would be the agent of the dead capable of interacting, and responding to the living—as I have argued, the *akh*. The letters themselves, though, do not always make this apparent. Only four letters explicitly invoke the *akh*. The Leiden Papyrus 371 (dating to the New Kingdom) begins, “To the able (*iḳr*) *akh* Ankhere” explicitly identifying the recipient as *akh*. Similarly, upon the First Intermediate Period Chicago Jarstand the living petitioner writes, “you are an *akh iḳr*” (*ntk ʒḥ iḳr*). There is thus no question that the intended recipient is the *akh*. The Hu bowl, also dating to the First Intermediate Period, makes explicit the reciprocal relationship between the *akh* and the living: *jrr.t(w) prt-ḥrw n ʒḥ ḥr sbt ḥr tp tʒ* “Voice offerings are made for the *akh* because of the watching over of the one who is upon Earth.”

The final example is Wente’s ‘Misplaced’ stela (now re-discovered by Edmund Meltzer, personal correspondence 2012) published in *Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica*, 1975/76 and discussed by Meltzer in a 2008 ARCE paper. The letter, which Wente argues belongs to the First Intermediate Period, requested of the deceased, “Remove the

infirmity of my body. Become *akh* before me, that I may see you fighting on my behalf in a dream. I will (then) deposit offerings for you...” Meltzer has confirmed that Wente’s copy of the text is accurate in this section. We can thus establish that the author of the letter is indeed invoking the *akh*. Furthermore, this text clearly illustrates the existence of a social contract, which I proposed above. The author of this letter hopes to witness the *akh* fighting on his behalf, and in return the author promises the provisioning of offerings.

## **2.2e: Socio-religious significance of the terms *ꜣḫ-īkr* and *ꜣḫ-ꜥpr***

It is not uncommon to find the term *akh* followed by a qualifying adjective, as has been highlighted in the previous sections. Adjectives used seem to be contingent on both the historic period and the text corpus. For our period of concern, the Old through Middle Kingdoms, two adjectives are most common: *īkr* and *ꜥpr*. The following section will analyze Old through Middle Kingdom attestations of the phrases *ꜣḫ-īkr* and *ꜣḫ-ꜥpr* in an attempt to understand the socio-religious utility of these terms in order to better understand the nature of the *akh* during this period. This section will similarly investigate the Coffin Texts, Appeals to the Living, and Letters to the Dead.

The term *īkr* has been translated (*inter alia*) as “excellent,” “able,” “effective,” and “powerful.” The fact remains, though, that a proper study of this term has yet to be preformed—although Demarée does address the term, preferring the translations “able,” “capable,” or “skillful” (1983, 197). Because of what I see as an inherent relational nature of this adjective, I think the best translations are “able” or “effective” with the implication of being able or effective *for* someone/thing. The online Thesaurus Linguae Aegyptiae gives a similar translation. It provides the definition “nützlich,” meaning

useful, which similarly carries an implication of being useful *at* something or *for* someone/thing. Since *ikr* is a common adjective used to describe the dead as *akh*, it can be proposed that one of the primary roles of the dead was to be effective, or able; when called upon by the living, the dead was to be useful for the living.

The term *ꜥpr* seems to have a clearer definition, being almost always translated as “equipped” and sometimes as “prepared.” But what is the *akh* equipped with? Someone can be equipped with physical equipment, or more abstractly, with knowledge. Indeed, when we see *ꜥh-ꜥpr* in extended texts, the phrase is usually followed by something relating to knowledge of spells, or magic: phrases such as, “I know everything which is *ikr*,”<sup>37</sup> “I know all the secret magic,”<sup>38</sup> and “a lector priest who knows his spells.”<sup>39</sup> Use of this adjective in describing the state of the dead is one of the pieces of evidence that has been used to support the assertion that the dead had access to “secret magic” and “spells” like those presented to the king in the Pyramid Texts (Smith 2009a).

With this basic understanding of the terms *ꜥh*, *ikr*, and *ꜥpr* on their own, an analysis of non-royal texts from the Old through Middle Kingdoms may illuminate the socio-religious meanings of *ꜥh-ikr* and *ꜥh-ꜥpr*. Within this period, I will try to access the earliest identified examples in order to better understand the original meanings and uses of these terms.

As discussed above, the term *akh* is found in 374 Coffin Text spells. Of these spells, the phrase *ꜥh-ikr* is found in seven spells; while, the phrase *ꜥh-ꜥpr* is found in forty-four spells, accounting for 86% of the adjectival phrases. Both terms are found together in only one Coffin Text spell (CT 11b). There is, thus, a clear favoring of the

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<sup>37</sup> From the tomb of Hezi (Strudwick 2005, 275)

<sup>38</sup> From the tomb of Ibi (Urk. I, 145, 2)

<sup>39</sup> From the tomb of Harkhuf (Urk. I, 122, 13)

term *ꜣh-ꜥpr*, “equipped *akh*, ” in the Coffin Texts. The phrase also accounts for 12% of all the references to *akh* in the Coffin Texts. The Coffin Texts are spells that help protect and guide the dead’s transition into the divine Hereafter. In this religious circumstance, the deceased would desire to emphasize, via text, his being equipped both with the proper funerary equipment and necessary knowledge.

The socio-religious function of the tomb and its associated inscriptions is illuminating here. The tomb was meant not only to house the dead for eternity but also to be the primary locus of the funerary cult—a cult dependent upon the living. As previously stated, the term *ikr* means not only “able” but specifically it describes a state in which someone is able or effective *for* someone. The dead partook in social relations with the living: it is well established that the funerary cult was not unidirectional. The dead were useful for the living just as the living were useful to the dead. In exchange for funerary offerings, the dead would protect or help the living. In this social role, the dead would desire to display themselves as effective and able—as an *ꜣh-ikr*. Being equipped with knowledge was additionally beneficial, contributing to the dead’s efficacy. Demarée similarly echoes this suggestion, writing that “iconographic evidence, together with the textual evidence of the appeals to the living suggests that in Old Kingdom private tombs the deceased tomb owner is the *ꜣh-ikr* in his/her desired state in the afterlife” (1983, 205).

The Letters to the Dead also make reference to the *ꜣh-ikr*. Ten of the fifteen artifacts date to the Old through Middle Kingdoms. Of this set, three letters explicitly invoke the *akh* as the recipient of the letter: Chicago Jarstand, Hu Bowl and Wente’s Misplaced, now found, Stela. While Wente’s stela and the Hu Bowl only make reference to an *akh* without a modifier, the Chicago Jarstand invokes the *ꜣh-ikr* (“*ntk ꜣh ikr*”).

While the dataset here is small (only one known example), the evidence falls in line with the conclusions drawn above: in their social capacity the dead were invoked as *akh* or *ꜥḥ-ikr*. As *ꜥḥ-pr* the dead were imbued with embedded religious knowledge enabling navigation of the netherworld and equipping them with the material requirements of the earthly realm. Thus, this term is more commonly used in religious, funerary texts.

## 2.2f: Conclusions

The dead and the living were clearly participating within intersecting social networks of interaction. The deceased in his social capacity is *akh*, but more specifically he is *ꜥḥ-ikr*. He is a spirit who is effective for the living petitioner. Indeed, Egyptian didactic literature makes clear that *maat* referred not only to large-scale political order but to social order as well. According to *maat* everyone had a place within social networks and these social roles came with social expectations and customs. In death, these roles and networks continued to exist—and the dead were expected to partake in their form as *akh* or *ꜥḥ-ikr*.

In a Middle Kingdom Letter to the Dead on a bowl at the Louvre, the author writes to the *akh* saying, “you are effective (*ikr*) upon earth, as you are potent (*mnḥ*) in the necropolis.” This concept also played out in the archaeological record. Heqaib, a Middle Kingdom nomarch, was effective during life. Similarly, in death he was both effective within the earthly realm—manifest in his settlement shrine—but also he was potent in the necropolis, at his tomb. Admittedly, Heqaib, represents someone who was celebrated as more than a mere effective and equipped *akh*: he was worshipped as a god, *ntr*. So the questions arise: Why are some Egyptians *akh*, and others *ntr*? Do some dead

exist somewhere along this spectrum of efficacy and divinity; is it a sliding scale? What cultural and religious processes allow this deification to occur and what utility, if any, do these deified dead possess that the *akh* does not? The rest of this thesis will be concerned with those dead whose terminology and cults diverge from what has been presented above as average. Some of these dead are explicitly marked as gods, while others are found in contexts typically reserved for divine entities, but are not explicitly referred to as such. However, in all of the following instances the dead are marked as distinct from the average *akh*.

### **CHAPTER THREE:** **APOTHEOSIS IN THE OLD KINGDOM**

This section will present evidence for the deification of three Old Kingdom officials: Djedi, Mehu, and Kagemni.

TABLE 5: Cases of Old Kingdom apotheosis			
Name	Date of Life/Death	Date of Deification	Location
Djedi	Dynasty IV or V	Dynasty V	Saqqara (?)
Mehu	Dynasty VI, Teti-Pepi I	Dynasty VI, Pepi I (?)	Saqqara
Kagemni	Dynasty VI, Teti	Dynasty VI	Saqqara

Other officials, Hordjedef (at Giza), Ptahhotep (at Saqqara), and the governors of ‘Ain Asil (at the Dakhla Oasis), were also distinguished during the Old Kingdom, but they were not deified, and will, thus, be discussed in Chapter Five. Though much remains unknown about the setting(s) of Djedi’s, Mehu’s, and Kagemni’s apotheosis, it is clear that by the end of the Sixth Dynasty these three individuals were distinguished from other average dead and underwent apotheosis. Djedi and Kagemni were both distinguished by their inclusion in *imꜣḥ.w ḥr* formulae. Additionally, contemporaneous titles indicate that Djedi had a priesthood dedicated to his divinized form, and in one instance a divine determinative was used following his name—quite literally categorizing him as divine. Mehu and Kagemni’s apotheosis was demonstrated by the inclusion of their names (or the hypocoristic Gemni for the case of Kagemni) in the divine position within theophoric names. Furthermore, the characters called Djedi and Kagemni who were included in literary texts of the Middle Kingdom and Second Intermediate Period were conceivably



meant to be these historic figures. Although this does not support the hypothesis of apotheosis, it does possibly speak to the endurance of Kagemni and Djedi within social memory.

This chapter will show that evidence for apotheosis comes primarily from the cemeteries at Saqqara—notably nearby the capital and the epicenters of royal power. Djedi, Mehu, and Kagemni were all distinguished and deified immediately or very soon after their death. Though evidence for their deification is conclusive, they never received the fully articulated cult and titulary like that which is witnessed in the Middle Kingdom cases of Isi and Heqaib. None are explicitly called gods, and despite the evidence of a priest for Djedi, there is no evidence for the construction of a shrine or monument separate from his tomb. Thus, a trend can be identified: during the Old Kingdom apotheosis occurred rapidly after one's death in the area nearby the capital; though rapid, deification did not develop as fully as it did in the provinces during the Middle Kingdom. I explain this as a reflex of the fact that dependency on the king's role as facilitator between life and the afterlife was strongest near the capital; thus, as his political—and as such, religious—centrality waned during the late Old Kingdom, there was a more immediate and pressing need to fill this structural vacuum (see §6.2). However, because this action was occurring within the shadow of the king's domain (literally, in some instances, these cults were developing adjacent to the king's pyramid), decorum still restricted the popular articulation of apotheosis. Additionally, I hypothesize that these expressions of local cults of deified dead fall in line with religious expression elsewhere (Bussmann 2010).

### **Chapter 3.1: Djedi**

In a 1955 article Goedicke suggested that an Old Kingdom man named Djedi might have been deified in the Sixth Dynasty (Goedicke 1955). Djedi's deification, though, was in fact already constituted in the Fifth Dynasty. His apotheosis is evinced by a divine determinative following his name in two instances, categorizing him as a god, and evidence of a priesthood dedicated to his cult. Unfortunately, we do not have any monuments (no tomb or burial) that can be definitively associated with this Djedi. For example, a Fifth Dynasty grave at Giza invokes a man named Djedi upon its broken, mostly illegible false door, but it is impossible to tell, with any certainty, whether the Djedi of this tomb is the deified Djedi of discussion here due to the poor state of the grave's preservation (Hassan 1932, 86-89). What we do have is epigraphic evidence from other tombs that make reference to a distinguished and deified dead named Djedi.

From this evidence, it can be reconstructed that Djedi lived in either the Fourth or Fifth Dynasty, and was deified in the Fifth Dynasty (dating will be discussed below alongside specific evidence). A magician named Djedi was also a prominent character in the "Tales of Miracle and Wonder" known from pWestcar. It is unclear whether these Djedi's were meant to be the same individual, but it is possible that Djedi was deified in the Old Kingdom and memorialized in later literature, similar to what was done with Kagemni and Hordjedef. Some scholars have dismissed the evidence in support of Djedi's deification (notably Fischer 1965 and Daoud 1998, 32), based primarily on the basis that Djedi refers not to a man, but rather a manifestation of the god Ptah. This section will first present the evidence in support of the deification of Djedi, with the




assumption that Djedi was a man. It will then explain, and consequently repudiate, the counter-argument that the name Djedi referred to the god Ptah.

### ***Epigraphic Evidence***

Four artifacts speak to Djedi's distinction and deification: (1) "Goedicke's Stela," (2) "Stela of *Wsr*," (3) "False Door of Ptahshepses," and (4) "Cairo Stela." All of these artifacts come from Saqqara, with the exception of Goedicke's stela, which is unprovenanced. It is possible, then, that Djedi's deification was localized to the area around Saqqara. Indeed, the potential for locally restricted cults of worship attributed to deified dead has been argued, notably, by Gunn (Firth and Gunn 1926, 130).

Goedicke's Stela is a Sixth Dynasty stela that appeared "some time ago on the New York market" and included the phrase *imꜣh.w hr Dd*, which speaks to his distinguished status (Goedicke 1955, 31). The significance of the *imꜣh.w hr* formula and its utility in identifying one's distinguished status is discussed above (§1.2a). Goedicke dated the stela to the late Sixth Dynasty without any further explanation or justification. Unfortunately, he did not provide a line drawing, image, or any description of its decoration, shape, size, material or what the rest of the text might have said. Additionally, since it was "from the New York market" it is challenging, if not impossible, to locate this stela and confirm his dating. Since Goedicke was very familiar with Old Kingdom language and orthography, though, I think it is justified to take him on his word on this point. His dating also places the stela in the general period as the other artifacts presented here, which is to be expected.

The “Stela of Wsr” also includes evidence in support of Djedi’s distinction, as evinced by his invocation in the formula *imꜣh.w hr Dd* (Daoud 1998, 33-35). The stela was discovered in the Teti cemetery at Saqqara and published by Firth and Gunn (1926, 183). Daoud dates the stela to the late Sixth Dynasty or the Herakleopolitan Period based on its style and some orthographic indicators (Daoud 1998 33-34). Specifically, he notes that the “corpulent or the mature portrait of the deceased on the inner jambs” is “associated with false doors of the second half of the Sixth Dynasty,” but became common in the Herakleopolitan Period (Daoud 1998, 33). Additionally, the ideographic writing of Anubis and the use of the abbreviated form of the word *imꜣh* without phonetic complements indicate a Herakleopolitan dating (Daoud 1998 34).


The Fifth Dynasty “False Door of Ptahshepses” (British Museum EA 682) indicates Djedi’s divine status by an inscription which includes the divine determinative  after Djedi’s name in a phrase that references his priesthood: *hm-ntr Dd*. Ptahshepses was the High Priest of Ptah and it was within his tomb at Saqqara (Saqqara Tomb C1) that his false door was excavated (Mariette 1889, 113).<sup>40</sup> Upon his false door, his titles are listed, including the priestly title *hm-ntr Dd* (lit. “servant of the god Djedi”), with the proper name in honorific transposition, like that of a god, and followed by a divine determinative: . Similarly, the “Cairo Stela” (Cairo Museum 1565) is a Sixth Dynasty stela from Saqqara that also lists Djedi’s name followed by a divine determinative, in the form of a divine standard , in a priestly (*hm-ntr*) title (Mariette 1889, 411-416; Goedicke 1955, 31). Together, these two attestations of a divine

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<sup>40</sup> For more information see Porter and Moss 1964, 464 and for images see the online British Museum catalog: [http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/collection\\_object\\_details.aspx?objectId=111377&partId=1&searchText=Ptahshepses&page=1](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=111377&partId=1&searchText=Ptahshepses&page=1)

determinative modifying Djedi's name and references to a priesthood of Djedi unequivocally identify him as a god.


### ***Literary Evidence: Papyrus Westcar***

The most famous reference to a man named Djedi comes from the “Tales of Miracle and Wonder,” also known as Papyrus Westcar (pBerlin 3033). The Tales are difficult to date—the manuscript at the earliest dates to the Fifteenth/Seventeenth Dynasty, but it is likely that the text existed earlier in some form (Parkinson 2002, 295-296). Although the historical reality of this character is unknown, it is possible the character was inspired by the enduring social memory of the deified Djedi (a similar suggestion is made in Morenz 1996, 122 n.541).<sup>41</sup> Indeed, this is the stance taken by Goedicke who admits, though, that, “the assumption here, namely, that the deity  is to be considered as the deified magician *ḏdy* known from the Westcar Papyrus, is in some ways still an hypothesis” (Goedicke 1955, 33). Djedi, according to the Tales in pWestcar, was a Fourth Dynasty magician, famed not only for his ability to sever heads and then successfully reattach them to their bodies without harm, but for his prophecy announcing the transition of power at the end of the Fourth/beginning of the Fifth Dynasty by three brothers born of the sun god Re. Djedi, in the tales, is described as a commoner of 110 years of age, who possessed power over animals (e.g. “he knows how to cause a lion to walk behind him, with its leash on the ground”) and had access to secret knowledge, such as the number of rooms in the sanctuary of Thoth, that evaded even the king. The


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<sup>41</sup> The historicity of this text has been debated. Gundlach suggests that the text possessed a “historisch völlig richtigen Kern” (Gundlach 1998, 247), while Hays alternatively argues that it was “not written as a conscientious history” and that “in at least two places, the author sacrificed historical accuracy for literary beauty” (Hays 2002, 30).


suggestion that the Old Kingdom deified Djedi has any correlation to the Djedi of Papyrus Westcar remains equivocal, since there is no direct evidence. The connection is suggestive, however, when considering that other distinguished and deified dead had texts ascribed to them, such as Hordjedef and Kagemni.

If for a moment we assume this to be true, the narrative would be as follows: Djedi is a Fourth Dynasty magician who, upon his death, is celebrated for his wisdom and by the late Old Kingdom is deified. Men around Saqqara continue to worship and invoke Djedi, whose cult continues at least into the Sixth Dynasty and perhaps into the First Intermediate Period if, in fact, the false door of *Wsr* dates to the Herakleopolitan Period. During the Middle Kingdom, or Second Intermediate Period, the Papyrus Westcar is penned and Djedi is memorialized in literature. Although this narrative is attractive, the fact remains that there is not sufficient evidence to securely make the connection between the  of the stelae and the Djedi of Westcar.

### ***Counter-argument***

Goedicke asserts, and I concur, that Djedi is the “name of a private person who was deified in the Old Kingdom” (Goedicke 1955, 32). The main counter-argument to this interpretation contends that Djedi is not the name of a man, but rather the phrase refers to a manifestation of Ptah (Fischer 1965; Daoud 1998). The argument arises from a debate as to how the phrase should be read: Djedi +  determinative, or *Djed*-shepses. *Djed*-shepses, meaning the “noble (*shepses*) *Djed*-pillar,” is a known alias of Ptah in the New Kingdom and later (Holmberg 1946, 157-159). The Thesaurus Linguae Aegyptiae and Anthroponymes et Généalogies de l’Égypte Ancienne databases have records for at

least two examples (beyond those mentioned already here) of the personal name Djedi (though all with varied orthographies) that date to the Old Kingdom.<sup>42</sup> These personal names refer to the tomb of a man at Giza and a woman from Edfu; thus, although not very popular, there should be no doubt that Djedi was a legitimate Old Kingdom personal name. Furthermore, I will show that the phrase in question, , should be read as Djedi +  determinative based on orthographic trends. I will then refute the evidence put forth primarily by Fischer (1965) and followed by others, which asserts that  is an alias of Ptah. It should be noted, however, that Holmberg indicates that the association between *dd šps(s)* and Ptah is first attested in the New Kingdom, and as such, it should not be applied to this earlier evidence (Holmberg 1946, 157-159).

Because of the multivalence of ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs it is possible to debate how a phrase should be read; some signs can be read as either (1) ideograms with a specific phonetic value, (2) phonograms, or (3) unpronounced determinatives or categorizers that inform the reader as to the category of the word. To further complicate this issue, some determinative signs are also phonograms or ideograms. This means it is often impossible to determine with certainty the reading of a word; in these instances context tends to supply some explanation as to how the word should be read. Of specific concern here is the phrase .

The man seated upon a chair (Gardiner signs A50 or A51) can be read both as a determinative referring to revered dead person and as the word *šps(s)*—written both with one s and with two s's interchangeably, which can be translated as “noble,” “august,” or

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<sup>42</sup> See: <http://aaew.bbaw.de/tla/servlet/GetWcnRefs?f=0&l=0&of=0&ll=450047&db=0&lr=0&mo=1&wt=y&bc=Start>; <http://www.ifao.egnet.net/bases/agea/noms/?id=521>

“valuable.” Notably, when the term *šps(s)* is meant to be understood as an ideogram (and not as a determinative), it is almost always written, in the Old Kingdom, with one or two “s” phonetic complements (Goedicke 1955, 32). This phonetic complement is more commonly written with the traditional “s,” folded cloth sign, but can also use the “z,” door-bolt sign, which by Middle Egyptian becomes interchangeable with the “s.”

Goedicke suggests that in every instance in which the term *šps(s)* is part of a name, and thus definitively not being used as a determinative, the inscription includes “s” phonetic complements (Goedicke 1955, 32). The false door of Ptahshepses, mentioned above, provides evidence to this effect. Upon the monument, the name of Fourth Dynasty King Shepseskaf with two “s” phonetic complements clearly visible, written after the seated *šps(s)* sign (see FIGURE 1). Upon this same false-door, the tomb owner’s name is similarly written with two “s” phonetic complements (see FIGURE 2).



FIGURE 1: Detail of King Shepseskaf’s name from the Stela of Ptahshepses (British Museum EA 682)

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FIGURE 2: Detail of Stela of Ptahshepses (British Museum EA 682) showing Ptahshepses’ name




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<sup>43</sup> Original image can be viewed at:  
[http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/collection\\_object\\_details/collection\\_image\\_gallery.aspx?partid=1&assetid=386879001&objectid=111377](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details/collection_image_gallery.aspx?partid=1&assetid=386879001&objectid=111377)

<sup>44</sup> Original image can be viewed at:  
[http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/collection\\_object\\_details/collection\\_image\\_gallery.aspx?partid=1&assetid=92309001&objectid=111377](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details/collection_image_gallery.aspx?partid=1&assetid=92309001&objectid=111377)



To summarize, the false-door of Ptahshepses provides evidence supporting Goedicke’s suggestion that the seated figure hieroglyph is to be read as *šps* when it is accompanied by one (or two) “s” phonetic complements. The consistent exception to this rule seems to be the title *šps-nswt*, meaning something like “the one whom the King favors,” which was not written with the phonetic complement (Murray 1908; Jones 2000, 988-989). This is not surprising, however, since titles tend to be abbreviated. Daoud, though, is convinced that the phrase *dd šps(s)* refers to a manifestation of the god Ptah (following Fischer 1965, 52-53) and does not refer to a deified dead named Djedi (Daoud 1998, 32). The name Djedi, however, in the four examples discussed above is written with a *djed*-pillar and a *šps* sign without phonetic complements () suggesting the rendering of the name Djedi and not the phrase *djed*-shepses.

In Papyrus Westcar Djedi’s name is typically spelled with two *djed*-pillars followed by a reed leaf phonetic complement, a papyrus scroll determinative, and a seated man determinative, which is commonly employed in the writing of a personal name: . In one instance, his name is also spelled , without the reed leaf phonetic complement, though I suspect this has more to do with space restrictions, than a formal alternative orthography, since it is close to the papyrus margin. In ancient Egypt, it was not uncommon for the same name to be spelled in different ways. In the Herakleopolitan Period, for example, the same name was typically spelled in a variety of ways on the very same stela (Daoud 1998, 31). Thus, orthography variance of this type is neither proof for or against the identification of the other Djedi’s (spelled ) as a man.

Another variance in orthography is the inconsistent inclusion of the divine determinative  following the name . Notably, in Goedicke’s Stela and the Stela of

*Wsr*, discussed above, the divine determinative is not included, but in these examples Djedi is being invoked in a formula that communicates distinguished status, rather than deified status and as such a divine determinative would not be necessary. Because of this, though, Fischer (1965, 52) and Daoud (1998, 32) have argued that the phrase *dd šps(s)* should be read as an alias of Ptah because other known aliases of Ptah, such as *hry-bꜣk.f*, also inconsistently receive a divine determinative. This does not prove, however, that the Djedi being referenced in Goedicke's Stela and the Stela of *Wsr* is a manifestation of Ptah, simple because other aliases of Ptah also sometimes don't have divine determinatives. In fact, many gods' names do not consistently receive a divine determinative, and this fact does not suggest that they are all aspects of Ptah.

Fischer is further critical of Goedicke's interpretation of *dd šps(s)* as a deified man named Djedi because, he argues, the theophoric names invoking *dd šps* are paralleled by names referring to Ptah; he gives the examples of the personal name *šps-pw-dd-špss* with the similar personal name invoking Ptah, *šps-pw-Pth*, and the personal name *Ny-kꜣw-dd-špss* paralleled by the name *Ny-kꜣw-Pth* (Fischer 1965, 53). Fischer fails to reference, though, that there exist other personal names with this exact structure that invoke gods who are clearly not aliases of Ptah: *šps-pw-Mn*, for example, clearly invokes the god Min who is not an alias or form of Ptah, (Ranke PNI 1935, 326) and *Ny-kꜣw-inpw*, *Ny-kꜣw-Nbty*, *Ny-kꜣw-Rꜥ*, *Ny-kꜣw-ḥtḥr*, *Ny-kꜣw-ḥr*, *Ny-kꜣw-ḥnm* are all attested names that invoke the gods Anubis, Nebty, Hathor, Horus, and Khnum, respectively (Ranke PNI 1935, 180). If Fischer's argument that these personal names invoking *dd šps(s)* refer to Ptah because of parallels to names with a similar structures that invoke Ptah, then one could just as convincingly argue that *dd šps(s)* should be associated with

Min, Anubis, Hathor, etc. Fischer's proposal is a more complicated interpretation than it needs to be, and there is simply not sufficient evidence to support Fischer's counter arguments. The evidence does support, however, the identification of a man named Djedi whose name received divine determinatives on two occasions.

### ***Conclusions***

The evidence above supports the assertion that there was an Old Kingdom man named Djedi, who was distinguished from other average dead through invocation of his name within a formula reserved for distinguished dead (and the king/gods), references to a priesthood dedicated to him, and the inclusion, on two occasions, of a divine determinative following his name. When analyzed in its entirety, the evidence convincingly shows that Djedi underwent apotheosis.

### **Chapter 3.2: Mehu**

Whereas the locus for the cult of Djedi is unclear, the cult of the vizier Mehu (*Mḥw*) is securely located at Saqqara nearby his mastaba (Altenmüller 1998). Mehu lived under the reigns of Teti and Pepi I, during the early Sixth Dynasty. His mastaba was first discovered by Saad and subsequently published by Hussein and Altenmüller (Saad 1941; Hussein 1943; Altenmüller 1998). Evidence for Mehu's apotheosis comes entirely from onomastic evidence associated with a local official named Bia (*Bỉz*). Although there is only a single observed marker of apotheosis for Mehu, its exclusive nature makes it convincing. Bia was a Sixth Dynasty official buried at Saqqara nearby the mastaba of

vizier Mehu, which was located near the Unas causeway (Altenmüller 1998). Epigraphic evidence from Bia's tomb does not provide an exact date for his burial, and the name is not listed in Ranke (1935). There are at least two attendants, though, with the name Bia known from the tomb of Mehu, though both of their names are spelled differently than the Bia in discussion here (Wilson 1954, 249). It is still possible, though, to presume that Bia was a subordinate of Mehu, and is attested by a different orthography in Mehu's tomb as one of his attendants. Wilson also notes that the titles possessed by Bia were common "at the very end of the Old Kingdom" (Wilson 1954, 249). It is probable, then, that Bia lived near the end of the Sixth Dynasty, perhaps within a generation or two of Mehu.

Elements of Bia's chapel, including a false door and three inscribed limestone slabs, were excavated by Zaki Saad during his 1939-1940 season. Saad's preliminary report briefly discusses the false door and two of the three known slabs; he identifies the slabs as belonging to a certain Bia whose chapel, located to the south-east of Mehu's mastaba, was not yet excavated (Saad 1941). It was not until 1954, with the publication of John Wilson's article "A Group of Sixth Dynasty Inscriptions," that a set of photographs, line drawings, translations, and commentary were made accessible. In this article Wilson republishes in greater detail some of the objects mentioned by Saad in his excavation reports. Wilson is also the first to suggest, based on evidence from these slabs, that the vizier Mehu may have been deified—a notion that Altenmüller maintains (Wilson 1954, 264; Altenmüller 1998, 85). The primary evidence for Mehu's deification is two theophoric names of children of Bia, in which Mehu is invoked as a god: Nebipumehu (*nb.i-pw-Mḥw*), Mehuemhat (*Mḥw-m-ḥst*), and Mehu (*Mḥw*). The names of

Bia's sons are found within, what Wilson refers to as, "Inscription B" and will be discussed fully below (Wilson 1954).

Based on the text and imagery, Wilson's "Inscription B" is likely an architrave set over an unidentified false door. This "Inscription B" is inscribed into a limestone slab and is comprised of two sets of five horizontal lines of text that start roughly in the middle of the slab to be read outwards, towards the edges of the slab. The slab is broken very close to this vertical division, creating a "left" and "right" side of the slab.<sup>45</sup> Both texts are fairly standard funerary inscriptions. The inscription on the right begins with a *ḥtp-di-nswt* offering formula invoking Anubis. In this inscription Bia is associated with the *imzḥ.w* "revered ones" and is identified as a *ḥt ikr*, "effective *akh*." The inscription is set above a scene depicting Bia seated before a table of offerings. Opposite Bia are three of his children acting as offering bearers; behind him is a standing woman identified as "*iti*." The inscription on the left opens with an Appeal to the Living and is followed by a request for an invocation offering. Here Bia is identified as a lector priest and *ḥt pr*, "prepared *akh*," which balances his identification on the right as *ḥt ikr*. On the left is a second scene depicting Bia seated, but this time with his wife, Idut, seated behind/alongside him before an offering table and five children. His daughter, Hezit, is drawn quite small underneath the offering table. The other four children are his sons and are identified (from left to right) as Khai, Mehu, Nebi-pu-Mehu, and Mehu-em-hat. The names of these sons provide the evidence for Mehu's apotheosis.

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<sup>45</sup> This slab was not mentioned in Saad's original excavation publication and by the time of Wilson's publication, the right side of the slab was missing and he thus did not provide a discussion or translation of it. In 1956, Fischer was able to locate a photo negative of the right side of the slab at the Department of Antiquities in Saqqara, which he was allowed to reproduce in Fischer, 1965. "*Bi* and the Deified Vizier *Mḥw*." *JARCE* 4: 49–53.

## ***Onomastic Evidence***

Arguably, onomastics provide the most fruitful examples of individual relationships with the divine prior to the New Kingdom. Personal names could invoke the gods in a variety of ways and be used to communicate types of human-divine relationships (see §1.2b). The name Nebi-pu-Mehu can be translated as “Mehu is my lord.” The term “lord” in itself is not a marker of divinity; indeed, the king was often described as lord over his subjects as were officials over their subordinates. The remarkable element here is that Mehu is lauded as lord as part of someone’s name—the name of his presumed subordinate’s son in fact. While this in itself does not prove that Mehu was considered a god, it certainly suggests that Mehu was distinguished from others as particularly elite, effective and/or potentially as possessing divine qualities since this sort of construction is usually reserved for theophoric and basilo-phoric names. Bia’s son Mehu-em-hat’s name makes this distinction more clear. This name translates to “Mehu is at the fore.” As described in the introduction, the construction of a personal name with a divine name followed by the *m-hꜣt* compound preposition is well attested. Prior to the New Kingdom, the first element in this name formula is exclusively, except in a single instance, reserved for a divine name, e.g. *ʾImn-m-hꜣt* (Ranke 1935, I 430). Thus, the use of Mehu’s name in the primary position within Bia’s son’s name is evocative, signaling Mehu’s divinity.

## ***Conclusions***

Unfortunately, this is the extent of evidence available for reconstructing the nature of Mehu’s elevated status. There is no material or textual evidence for a cult beyond the

expected mortuary chapel and no indication of a dedicated priesthood. This can be explained in two ways: (1) Mehu was fully divinized, recognized as a god by the time of Bia's children, but only minimal evidence has survived or (2) Mehu's status exists within a spectrum of distinction in which he is marked as more than an average dead by certain characteristics of divinization. It is impossible, without further evidence, to ascertain which explanation unequivocally describes Mehu, but his inclusion in these restrictive name constructions suggests a divine status.

Furthermore, at the onset of this study, I argued that only one of these divine indicators need be observable to include a case in this discussion of deified dead. Because the archaeological record is incomplete, it is probable that if Mehu received divine honor in one instance, he likely received it in perished others. This is, of course, a problematic argument. So, even without corroborating evidence, the solitary instance of Mehu being invoked in a divine name construction is compelling. His cult and imagination as a god was likely restricted, but because of the public nature of a name, Mehu's conception as a god invariably extended beyond Bia's immediate family. It is impossible, without additional evidence, to say for sure if anyone else partook in the cult of Mehu, but the fact that three of Bia's four sons invoke Mehu in their names must have been noted by the communities in which they interacted. Furthermore, Bia's choice (or ability) to display these names in his tomb speaks to the fact that the invocation of Mehu in personal names was socially accepted, which means that there must have existed, somewhere in local memory, at least the acknowledgement, if not the confirmation, that Mehu was conceived of as divine.

### Chapter 3.3: Kagemni

*These facts can hardly lead to any other conclusion than that the Vizier Kagemni was deified not long after his death, and was known, chiefly by his abbreviated name of Gmni<sup>46</sup>*

Kagemni was vizier during the reign of the Sixth Dynasty king Teti. He was buried at the cemetery associated with Teti at Saqqara and it is from this complex that most of the evidence for his deification is found (von Bissing 1909; Firth and Gunn 1926). Specifically, Kagemni is invoked in the *imꜣḥ.w ḥr* formula two (possibly three, see below) times on funerary monuments of local men who associated their burials, through vicinity, with the tomb of Kagemni. Additionally, a number of the men whose burials are found nearby Kagemni's mastaba possessed theophoric names that invoke Kagemni, through the hypocoristic *Gmni*, as a god. Finally, like many of the other deified dead discussed in this study, Kagemni is also known from later literature. The third section of this sub-chapter will consider this literary evidence because of its prominence in the scholarship, even though there is good reason to disassociate the character of the text from the historical figure.

#### ***Funerary And Formulaic Evidence for Kagemni's Distinction***

Kagemni's mastaba in the Teti cemetery at Saqqara, discovered by Lepsius in the late nineteenth century, was first published by von Bissing (1909; 1911), whose volumes focused primarily on the internal inscriptions and scenes; Firth and Gunn completed the mastaba's publication in 1926 following Firth's excavations of the Teti cemetery. Excavations of Kagemni's tomb, located to the immediate north of Teti's pyramid, show

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<sup>46</sup> Firth and Gunn 1926, 130



that he possessed numerous high titles under the reigns of Kings Djedkare Isesi, Unas, and Teti, though his titles reached their zenith under the reign of Teti (Firth and Gunn 1926, 167). Indeed, it seems as though Kagemni became an increasingly important political figure under Teti, during whose reign Kagemni possessed the titles of vizier (*t3ti*), inspector (*shd*) of the pyramid of Teti, and overseer (*imi-r*) of Teti's pyramid town (*niwt dd-sw-tti*). His titular prominence was mirrored in the grandeur of his tomb, around which burials of varied status seemingly clustered.<sup>47</sup> Kagemni's large mastaba would have been prominent within the visual landscape of the cemetery and included strikingly high quality reliefs that illustrated his dominant community status (Firth and Gunn 1926; Badawy 1979; Harpur 2005). Additionally, possibly motivated by an expectation of cultic activity or perhaps as a product of innovation in architectural display of social capital, Kagemni's mastaba included an external false door and offering table on the eastern face of his mastaba, which aligned with his internal false door located in his chapel (Firth and Gunn 1926, 20; Hamilton forthcoming<sup>48</sup>). Indeed, engagement with the mastaba after Kagemni's interment is demonstrated by numerous secondary inscriptions that include visitors' names and, sometimes, titles—notably the titles of *hm-k3*, “ka-priest,” and *sh3 n s3*, “scribe of the phyle” (Hamilton forthcoming; Harpur and Scremin 2006). Secondary inscriptions were not uncommon in Old Kingdom tombs and, as such, it does not prove Kagemni's distinguished status by itself, but considered alongside the epigraphic

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<sup>47</sup> It is very hard to say with any great certainty whether or not burials are truly clustering around Kagemni's mastaba since no scientific spatial analysis has been performed. It is clear from plans that a number of individuals, some whose names invoke Kagemni, are buried to the immediate east and south of Kagemni's mastaba.

<sup>48</sup> I want to acknowledge and give thanks to Julia Clare Francis Hamilton who very generously shared with me her unpublished Masters of Arts thesis (2014, University of Auckland) entitled “Veneration of Vizier Kagemni at Saqqara During the Late Old Kingdom and First Intermediate Period.” I look forward to the publication of her thesis as it will illustrate the complexity and challenges scholars face with this material; our interpretations of the exact same evidence differ significantly, which speaks to the need for more related studies and discourses on these issues.

evidence for his inclusion in *imꜣḥ.w ḥr* formulae (below), it adds to the overall picture that Kagemni possessed an elevated status within his community and that the locus of this distinction was his tomb.

More concrete evidence of Kagemni's posthumous distinction is the inclusion of his name as the agent in the *imꜣḥ.w ḥr* formula on three funerary monuments in the Teti cemetery, though only the first two are certain:

1. One of five limestone slabs of Herytep-Re Iti (Firth and Gunn 1926, plate 77 "block A," line 5): *imꜣḥ.w ḥr sꜣb tꜣty Kꜣgmni(i)*

This slab was discovered near the southern wall of Kagemni's mastaba and was part of a larger funerary monument (Firth and Gunn 1926, 212). This monument, composed of five limestone slabs, was discovered under a First Intermediate Period wall that ran nearby Kagemni's mastaba. Since the wall dates to the First Intermediate Period, the monument must pre-date it (Firth and Gunn 1926, 212). Based on stylistic evidence, Kanawati suggests a more precise dating of the Sixth Dynasty, reign of Pepi I or earlier, which would mean that Kagemni's deification occurred within a generation of his death (Kanawati 1999, 288). In fact, Kanawati has even suggested the possibility that the slab was carved while Kagemni was still alive (Kanawati 1999, 287). Stylistic dating of this type, though, can be contentious. Additionally, the socio-religious landscape of Egypt at this time would make the interpretation that Kagemni was distinguished while alive improbable (see §6).

2. Broken Offering Table of An Overseer (Firth and Gunn 1926, 223): *[i]mꜣḥ.w ḥr Kꜣgm[n(i)]*

The dating of this table is unclear and its precise findspot was,

unfortunately, not recorded by Firth and Gunn. Additionally, Firth and Gunn did not include line drawings or photographs of the offering table, which obstructs a paleographic dating. Hamilton has noted, based on the lack of an ox-head and bird-head in the *prr-hrw* inscription, that the offering table's inscription is similar to other offering tables dated to the late Sixth Dynasty or First Intermediate Period by Firth and Gunn (Hamilton forthcoming; Firth and Gunn 1926, 219-226).

3. Broken Wooden Statue of/for Gemni (Firth and Gunn 1926, 270-271): *im3hw hr* [sic?] *Gmn(i)*

This example is uncertain because the context of the find suggests that the statue should be dedicated to/owned by Gemni rather than invoking him. Gunn inserted a “sic” after the *hr* because he believed this was a mistake and that the author accidentally omitted the name of Osiris or Anubis here, based on parallels to the other three statues with which this artifact was discovered. The other three statues' inscriptions clearly label the statues as being owned by or dedicated to a man named Gemni who was described as *im3hw hr* Osiris in two instances and Anubis in the other. The inscription gives evidence for the distinction of a man named (Ka)Gemni, but the context suggests that this might be a mistake. The writing of the *im3hw hr* formula could suggest a late Old Kingdom or First Intermediate Period date.

While this evidence alone does not prove that Kagemni was deified, it does illustrate his distinguished status was conceptualized and present within local, social

memory by the Sixth Dynasty. The formula in which Kagemni is invoked is meant to communicate the favor provided by certain figures—usually the king, gods, or revered local men of power—which allowed for admittance into the afterlife (for a full discussion of this formula see §1.2a).

### ***Onomastic Evidence for Kagemni’s Deification***

The most succinct evidence for Kagemni’s apotheosis is the use of his name (or his hypocoristic Gemni) in personal names, especially those that are theophoric. All of the names that invoke Kagemni in either form date to the late Old Kingdom, First Intermediate Period, or Middle Kingdom and are found within the Teti cemetery complex.<sup>49</sup> There are five attestations of the name “Kagemni” from this complex (in addition to vizier Kagemni) and with the exception of one they date to the late Old Kingdom or early First Intermediate Period.<sup>50</sup> These five names represent at least four distinct individuals. The fifth name is known from a Middle Kingdom statue base and because the statue base is damaged leaving no other legible text except for *K3-gm.n(i) m3<sup>c</sup> hrw* it is impossible to discern whether this attestation is a unique fifth Kagemni or is possibly a statue erected in honor of another Kagemni (perhaps the vizier Kagemni being discussed here).<sup>51</sup> Additionally, nine individuals are known by the name Gemni,<sup>52</sup> and a tenth is known as Gemni with a good name (*rn=f nfr*) Megwi.<sup>53</sup> These names are not necessarily theophoric names. In the Middle Kingdom it is common for people to borrow

<sup>49</sup> An appendix listing each attestation with bibliographic references is included in Hamilton *forthcoming*.

<sup>50</sup> Firth and Gunn 1926, 127; 167; 129; 214; Kanawati and Khoulî 1984, 37, 41-42

<sup>51</sup> Firth and Gunn 1926, 129; Porter and Moss III 2, I, 55

<sup>52</sup> Firth and Gunn 1926, 116; 127; 128, 197-8; 208; 210; 214-215; Kanawati and Khoulî 1984, 330-331

<sup>53</sup> Firth and Gunn 1926, 127, 201

the names of the gods; personal names such as “Isis,” for example, are known (Vittmann 2013b, 4). But this practice is not securely attested in the Old Kingdom, though this could be circumstantial evidence in support of such an argument. Thus, the individuals with the name Kagemni could be recalling the name of a great local man, or possibly the name was simply popular for other reasons.

There are, however, a number of definitive theophoric names that invoke Kagemni through his hypocoristic Gemni. Notable are two individuals who possess the theophoric name *Gmn(i)-m-ḥꜣt*, meaning “Gemni is at the fore.”<sup>54</sup> As discussed in the introduction (§1.2b), this name construction almost (one exception) exclusively invokes deities and, as such, is strong evidence in support of Kagemni’s apotheosis. Furthermore, one individual possessed the theophoric name *Sꜣt-Gmn(i)*,<sup>55</sup> while two other individuals had the theophoric names *Sꜣt-Gmn(i)-ḥtp(.w)* and *Gmn(i)-ḥtp.w* respectively.<sup>56</sup> A fourth had the name *Gmn(i)-sꜥnh*.<sup>57</sup> All of these name patterns are identified as theophoric by Vittmann (2013b).

In addition to individuals with the name Kagemni, Gemni, and theophoric names invoking Gemni, thirteen additional attestations of names in which Gemni is an element are known from the necropolis.<sup>58</sup> These thirteen names invoke Gemni, but they are not explicitly theophoric. All of the names that invoke Kagemni or Gemni seem to be entirely limited to the cemetery (or at least I have not yet found evidence of these names outside

<sup>54</sup> Firth and Gunn 1926, 52-54, 127, 128, 187, 208; one *Gmn(i)-m-ḥꜣt* is known from numerous artifacts discovered in his tomb HMK 30

<sup>55</sup> Firth and Gunn 1926, 129, 188, 201

<sup>56</sup> Firth and Gunn 1926, 129, 204; 128, 261

<sup>57</sup> Borchardt 1964, 147; Daoud 2005, 177-8, pl. cxiii

<sup>58</sup> Other names invoking Gemni that are not conclusively theophoric are: *Gmn(i)-ii(.w)* (Firth and Gunn 1926, 128, 199); *Gmn(i)-iw(.w)* (Firth and Gunn 1926, 128, 210-211); *Gmn(i)-ꜥnh* (Firth and Gunn 1926, 128, 224); *Gmn(i)-ꜥnh(.w)-m-sꜣ=s* (Firth and Gunn 1926, 128, 206-207); *Gmn(i)-wsr=i* (Firth and Gunn 1926, 128); *Gmn(i)-m-sꜣ=f* (Firth and Gunn 1926, 128, 207, 261); *Gmn(i)-tss* (Firth and Gunn 1926, 129, 224)

the Saqqara region) suggesting, at the very least, a local favoring of this name (Ranke 1935; Scheele-Schweitzer 2014; Hamilton forthcoming). Kagemni was indubitably revered within his community as manifest in the popularity of his name in the necropolis, but he was also clearly invoked in theophoric constructions in personal names. The use of his hypocoristic, Gemni, in place of a god's name in personal names suggests that Kagemni was perceived of as a supernatural being akin to the gods.

### ***The Teaching for Kagemni***

The text, "The Teaching for Kagemni," belongs to a category of didactic literature referred to as "teachings" or "instructions." In "The Teaching for Kagemni," a Fourth Dynasty vizier gives advice to his son, Kagemni. The text, only the end of which is preserved on the Papyrus Prisse, is dated to the late Middle Kingdom (Prisse d'Avennes 1947). Thus, this could be part of a pseudoepigraphical tradition in which Middle Kingdom texts were placed within a claimed historic past that was not necessarily confined by "real" historical narratives. In this way, these texts were placed within a cultural memory of the past, allowing for the inclusion of elements of fantasy (Fischer-Elfert 2003). It is possible, then, that the Kagemni of the teaching is meant to be the same vizier Kagemni who lived in the Sixth Dynasty (and who is the topic of this study), despite the tale's setting in the Fourth Dynasty. Gunn, inaccurately, referred to Kagemni as a "wise sage" (1926, 130) despite the fact that he is never identified as the author of the text. Instead, Kagemni is the one receiving advice from an unidentified vizier. Additionally, Kagemni is never referred to as *rh ht* (the Egyptian equivalent of "wise sage") in the Egyptian textual record and is not included in the lists of famed writers

known from antiquity (e.g. P. Chester Beatty IV and P. Harris 500, aka the Harper's Song). The suggestion, then, that vizier Kagemni is the same Kagemni of the teaching is dubious. As such, it should not be included as evidence in support of Kagemni's deification or reverence as a "wise sage."

### ***Conclusions***

Arguments against Kagemni's deification are founded primarily on an assertion that the evidence in favor of his deification is speculative (Fischer 1965, 52; Baines 1987, 88; Kanawati 1999, 287; Hamilton forthcoming, 19). Many point to the fact that he is not explicitly identified as a *ntr*, "god." I would argue, however, that this is too narrow an interpretation (see my rejection of this argument above, §1.2). While the case for Kagemni may not be as articulated as Heqaib's or Isi's, his apotheosis is nevertheless demonstrated through his inclusion in theophoric names. Thus, if my interpretation that Kagemni underwent apotheosis is assumed, we can propose that his deification occurred immediately or very soon after his death, or later in the Sixth Dynasty and was likely restricted to Saqqara.

### **Chapter 3.4: Summary**

Evidence for apotheosis in the Old Kingdom is coming primarily from Saqqara, the elite cemetery near the capital. Additionally, evidence for this period relies largely on onomastic evidence. Cults are "modest" and are not as fully articulated as the Middle Kingdom examples of Heqaib and Isi, which will be discussed in Chapter Four. The

markers of apotheosis addressed in this chapter, though, are conclusive indicators of divine status. Kagemni and Mehu were invoked in theophoric names, while Djedi's name received a divine determinative on two occasions. Notably, evidence for apotheosis in the Old Kingdom was intimately tied to the funerary realm where display of social capital was determined by engrained royal power structures. As these power structures shifted at the end of the Old Kingdom, so did access and display (see a full discussion in §6.2). The modesty of these cults could be explained by their proximity to the capital where decorum was more restrictive. In the next chapter, which is concerned with apotheosis during the Middle Kingdom, I show that there is an observable shift away from the restrictive power structures of the capital, allowing for more fully expressed displays of divine status.



## **CHAPTER FOUR:** **APOTHEOSIS IN THE MIDDLE KINGDOM**

This section will consider evidence for apotheosis during the Middle Kingdom—specifically, the cases of Heqaib of Elephantine, Isi at Edfu, and Wahka at Qau el-Kebir.

TABLE 6: Cases of Middle Kingdom apotheosis			
<b>Name</b>	<b>Date of Life/Death</b>	<b>Date of Deification</b>	<b>Location</b>
Heqaib	Dynasty VI, Pepi II	Dynasty VI (?); Dynasty XI	Elephantine
Isi	Dynasty V-VI (Djedkare Izezi-Teti)	Dynasty XII	Edfu
Wahka (II?)	Dynasty XII, Senwosret III (?)	Late Middle Kingdom	Qau el-Kebir

While evidence for apotheosis during the Old Kingdom is convincing, evidence for apotheosis during the Middle Kingdom is irrefutable. Notably, Heqaib and Isi were both explicitly identified as *ntr*, “god.” Specifically, Isi is classified as *ntr ḥnh*, a “living god,” and in one instance a divine determinative follows Isi’s name, as is observed with the case of Djedi. Although no cultic space is attested which honors Isi or Wahka away from their tombs, a sanctuary for Heqaib is known on the island of Elephantine. This sanctuary was elaborated over many generations and includes local, private and royal additions. Monumental additions at Isi’s tomb and Heqaib’s sanctuary provide evidence for local priests dedicated to the cultic upkeep of Heqaib’s and Isi’s worship. Epigraphic evidence shows that Heqaib, Isi, and Wahka were invoked as part of *hṭp-di-nswt* formulae, while Heqaib was also included in *imꜣḥ.w ḥr* formulae, illustrating deification and local social distinction, respectively.

Contrary to what is witnessed in the Old Kingdom documentation, there is only evidence for apotheosis of a single Middle Kingdom official during the Middle Kingdom—Wahka. Middle Kingdom apotheosis first occurred generations after the death of Heqaib and Isi who were both Sixth Dynasty officials. There is some indication that a cult began to emerge around Heqaib during the Sixth Dynasty, though evidence remains circumstantial. It seems as though deification in the provinces took longer to develop, but when it did, it developed more fully than we see near the capital. Because this process was a slow, progressive operation, it did not fully materialize until the Middle Kingdom. That is not to say that these cults emerged out of nowhere in the Middle Kingdom; Heqaib and Isi were revered as, at least, distinguished dead after their death, but their divine cults are not attested until Dynasty XI, at the earliest. Additionally, none of the deified dead of the Middle Kingdom were associated with wisdom texts or literature. Instead it seems as though Heqaib, Isi, and Wahka were venerated because they were remembered for the deeds they performed during life—such as Heqaib’s reputation as a great warrior, or Isi’s and Wahka’s role as local dignitaries and leaders. Thus, Middle Kingdom apotheosis can be generalized on the basis of current evidence as occurring uniquely in the provinces and typically (but not exclusively) numerous generations after the death of the deified dead in question. This delay, followed by a fully materialized display of divine status was likely a reflex of the fact that royal influence was less restrictive in the provinces—or at least it was more challenging to implement and control decorum outside the capital.

Wahka’s rapid deification after his death, however, shows that there were still in place the mechanisms for accelerated apotheosis in the Middle Kingdom (similar to that

which is seen in the Old Kingdom). I suspect, then, that the cults to deified Heqaib and Isi were formed earlier than we can currently prove. I suggest that more enduring offerings and monuments were erected in the late First Intermediate Period and early Middle Kingdom, encouraged by local politics as a means of solidifying local power structures. Pretty quickly, by the time of Senwosret I, royal initiatives appropriated these spaces to control growing mechanisms of local legitimacy and power display.

## Chapter 4.1: Heqaib

Since Habachi's 1946 discovery of the sanctuary of Heqaib on Elephantine Island and his subsequent 1985 publication of the site, the deified Old Kingdom official, Pepinakht Heqaib, has become the oft cited example for the study of apotheosis in early Egypt. Pepinakht, whose "good name" (*rn nfr*) was Heqaib, was a Sixth Dynasty official (*iri-p<sup>c</sup>t, ḥ3ti-<sup>c</sup>, imi-r-ḥm.w-ntr*) under Pepi II who lived upon the island of Elephantine and was buried at the nearby cemetery of Qubbet el-Hawa (Tomb 35). Some time after his death (the exact date is disputed and will be discussed below) a sanctuary and cult were established for him on the island. Although Heqaib is our most secure example of apotheosis, because every marker of apotheosis is known for him—notably his explicitly being called a god, *ntr*, at a shrine built in his honor—the nature of Heqaib's divinity still remains debated among scholars. Some point to the fact that he never received a *ḥwt-ntr* temple (Fischer 1965); I would, however, counter that many gods, such as Shu or Nephthys, did not have temples and their divinity is not questioned on that basis (Franke 1994, 134). Heqaib's apotheosis and distinction is signified by his being identified as

“god” in texts, his inclusion in *imꜣḥ.w ḥr* and *ḥtp-di-nswt* formulae, a shrine built to celebrate his cult (referred to as both a *ḥwt-kꜣ* “ka-chapel” and *kꜣr* “shrine”), and evidence for priests dedicated to the upkeep of his cult. After detailing the archaeological and textual evidence in support of Heqaib’s deification, I will present various scholars’ interpretations and argue that, like other dead who have been discussed above, Heqaib was distinguished from average dead, but he was also deified.

### ***The Sanctuary, including Sarenput’s Stelae***

The sanctuary of Heqaib abuts a major street lined with houses and a large administrative building on Elephantine Island to the north of the Khnum temple and the Satet temple. The significance of Heqaib’s sanctuary within the local lived and religious landscape of Elephantine will be discussed below. Artifacts from the sanctuary were first discovered through controlled and legal removal of *sebakḥ* in 1932. The importance of the finds was noted by Chief Inspector of southern Upper Egypt, Labib Habachi, in 1944, who began excavations of the mud-brick building in 1946. Since 1969, the German Institute for Archaeology has conducted research and excavations of the numerous sites on Elephantine Island. The fullest discussion of the sanctuary of Heqaib is found in Detlef Franke’s 1994 monograph, which is a thorough investigation of the sanctuary, its history, and the related history of Heqaib’s deification. Additionally, a number of recent articles are worthy of note, including Böwe’s 2004 article which discusses phasing and who was active in the cults at the sanctuaries of Heqaib and Isi, and von Pilgrim’s 2006 article, which similarly discusses the development of Heqaib’s sanctuary.

The sanctuary, as it stands, was built almost entirely by Sarenput I with

modifications added by Sarenput's grandson, Sarenput II, and unnamed other men, identified as chief priests of the district (Habachi 1985, 158-9). Sarenput was a *h3ti*-<sup>c</sup>, or mayor, of Elephantine during the reign of Twelfth Dynasty King Senwosret I. Sarenput I also erected, among other things, two large stelae (Habachi's Stelae 9 & 10) that help in our understanding of the purpose of the sanctuary. Sarenput calls the sanctuary both a *k3r* "shrine" and a *hwt-k3*, a chapel for the *ka*-spirit. In general *hwt-k3* chapels were erected to honor the king, members of the royal family, and only rarely high officials, as is discussed in Chapter Five in the case of the governors of 'Ain Asil (Legros 2010, 159). The term for shrine, *k3r*, is known in the Old and Middle Kingdoms and refers to the naos, or shrine of a god. Upon Stela 9, Sarenput writes that he built the sanctuary and established for Heqaib divine offerings (*mnh n ntr htp=f*) so that "his god" Heqaib may welcome him and provide invocation offerings for the one who satisfies Heqaib, namely Sarenput. On this same stela, Sarenput describes erecting a stone shrine, a broad hall, sycamore trees, and a priestly house. This was all done in accordance with the wishes of King Senwosret I according to the text upon Stela 10. Indeed a chapel of Senwosret I has been discovered in the foundations of later temples on the island, proving that he had invested interest in the religious landscape of Elephantine. It is not known, however, for whom Senwosret's chapel was built.

The sanctuary is located by the modern museum, between two Middle Kingdom residential zones towards the east of the island (for a plan of Middle Kingdom Elephantine, see: Eaton-Krauss 1998, 13). The sanctuary was built along the same axis as the western residential quarter, integrating it spatially and visibly into Elephantine's lived landscape. It sits to the immediate north-west of the Satet temple, and to the north of the

presumed location—based on its New Kingdom position—of the Middle Kingdom Khnum Temple (see also the plan of New Kingdom Elephantine: Eaton-Krauss 1998, 15). Through its location, the sanctuary was associated with the other temples of the island, in what can be described as a sort of ‘religious zone’. It was placed alongside the other temples as an equal; a fact that is confirmed by texts, which placed Heqaib alongside the island’s other gods (Franke 1994, 140). Sandwiched between two residential zones and adjacent to the other prominent temples on the island, Heqaib’s sanctuary was situated in a high traffic zone through which the inhabitants of the island would have passed on a not infrequent, if even semi-regular, basis. Thus, although the inscribed remains at Heqaib’s sanctuary speak only of elite and royal donations, the sanctuary must also have been passed, if not visited, by the non-elite inhabitants and visitors at Elephantine. While participation in Heqaib’s cult may not be possible to ascertain with certainty, it is clear that at the very least Heqaib’s sanctuary, and thus his cult, was part of Elephantine’s visible and experienced religious landscape.

Upon Stela 9, Sarenput comments that he built the sanctuary anew since the earlier incarnation of the sanctuary was built “like that done by a foreigner” and that the sanctuary built for Heqaib by Sarenput was better than those of all who preceded him (Habachi 1985, 158). This is compelling evidence to suggest that the sanctuary existed earlier in some form—but from when exactly? An Eleventh Dynasty limestone lintel of King Nakhtnebtnefer Intef III was discovered in 1946 at the sanctuary’s western entrance. The lintel refers to an earlier building of a certain *sḥ* “noble,” but Heqaib is not referenced explicitly: *ms nfrw ir.n=f m mn=f n sḥ pn šp[s]///*, “begetter of goodness, he made as his monument to this august noble ///.” Habachi, though, was convinced: “Being

encountered in the sanctuary of Heqaib, there is no doubt that the latter is the one who is meant here by the words ‘this noble’” (Habachi 1985, 111). The earlier building mentioned by King Nakhtnebtpefer Intef III may, as Habachi suggests, have been built by his predecessor, King Wahankh Intef II. Habachi comes to this conclusion, that Intef II built the first sanctuary here, after considering Wahankh’s building activity elsewhere on the island and the fact that two of his statues were discovered nearby Heqaib’s sanctuary. Habachi suggests that this could have been a political move. At the beginning of King Wahankh’s reign, he was in possession of only the southern five nomes of Upper Egypt; the erection of a sanctuary dedicated to a local man/god of importance could have been a “gesture of good will” towards the people of the cataract region (Habachi 1985, 160). I am not convinced by this argument, and prefer to date the original sanctuary circumstantially to the reign of Intef III. This would place the construction of a sanctuary for Heqaib right before the official unification of Egypt during the Middle Kingdom, within approximately a century of Heqaib’s death. By the Twelfth Dynasty, the shrine had become a destination for elite travelers and, as such, kings appropriated this growing locus of importance as evinced by Sarenput’s stelae (Franke 1994, 90-98). The popularity of the shrine as a locus for cultic engagement and elite memorialization waned over time, with evidence tapering off by the beginning of the Seventeenth Dynasty (Böwe 2004, 16).

However, if we were to follow Junge, the veneration of Heqaib may have occurred even earlier, in the Sixth Dynasty, at a different shrine, which may have been located at his home or office (Junge in Kaiser, *et al* 1976, 98; Eaton-Krauss 1998, 43). Junge argues that a “Holzrelief der 6. Dynastie” depicting offering bearers was

discovered in a house likely inhabited by Heqaib, which was later used for his cult (Junge in Kaiser, *et al* 1976, 107).<sup>59</sup> The lack of an explicit reference to Heqaib, though, has led O'Connor to suggest that the site was instead a precursor to the Khnum temple (1992). I find both O'Connor's and Junge's arguments to be persuasive, but neither entirely convincing since the evidence here is scant and difficult to interpret either way. Junge does, however, raise an important point: the veneration of Heqaib could have, and likely did, begin before the construction of sanctuary.

This earlier dating for the origin of the veneration of Heqaib is supported by the construction of a cult hall at Qubbet el-Hawa to the north of his tomb by his son Sabni, which was also excavated by Habachi (Habachi 1981; Habachi 1985). The hall intersects with Heqaib's tomb and invokes him in the decoration, making clear that the hall was dedicated to Heqaib (Böwe 2004, 15). Indeed, this hall led Habachi to conclude that Heqaib was "of some repute as a deity" very soon after his death (Habachi 1985, 161). The hall was fronted by an open courtyard within which numerous devotees buried themselves (Habachi 1981, 14). This was likely the original locus of Heqaib's worship, which grew from his mortuary cult. Indeed, Habachi wonders if "perhaps after this court was totally occupied, his house on Elephantine was used for a similar purpose" before his sanctuary was built in the Eleventh or Twelfth Dynasty (Habachi 1985, 160). Thus, the evidence suggests the following narrative: Heqaib as revered as a distinguished dead upon his death in the Sixth Dynasty. His veneration grew in importance until, at some point in the First Intermediate Period, he was raised to the status of a god, the earliest

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<sup>59</sup> "Dann aber darf man dies auf dem Wege des Indizienschlusses als eine Art Kultstelle bezeichnen, eine Kultstelle, die Elemente des Grabkultes dazu nützt, eine Privateperson zu glorifizieren; hier, auf Elephantine, bietet sich an, in ihr den Vorgängerbau des sogenannten Heqaib Heiligtums des Mittleren Reiches zu sehen."



evidence of which can be dated to the reign of Intef III.

Evidence for priests in the service of Heqaib also comes primarily from Sarenput's stelae. Stela 10 addresses the priests directly: "Oh *wab*-priests of the prince Heqaib...a god is not ignorant of the one who sustains him" (lines 9-12 in Habachi 1985, 38). Franke points out that while there are not documents written by individuals identifying themselves as priests of Heqaib, there is a room in his sanctuary called a "chamber for the *wab*-priests," which was likely a sort of sacristy (Franke 1994, 134). Thus, by the reign of Senwosret I, there was an established priesthood for Heqaib's divinized form.

### ***Formulaic Evidence***

Heqaib's divine status can also be inferred from his invocation as a god as part of a *ḥtp-dī-nswt* formula. This offering formula typically named a god, or group of gods, alongside the king who together provided an offering to a named recipient (see §1.2b for a full discussion). Heqaib is invoked as part of this formula upon an altar and pedestal of a certain Amenemhet, son of Sattjeni, whom Habachi deduces must have lived near the end of the Twelfth Dynasty based on location of his monuments and his family tree (Habachi 1985, 60). The sandstone altar (Habachi object no. 34) and the pedestal (Habachi object no. 35) both read: *ḥtp-dī-nswt iri-p<sup>t</sup> ḥk3-ib*, "An offering which the king and the member of the elite, Heqaib, have given" (Habachi 1985, 59: Fig. 8a and Fig. 9a). Heqaib's identification as a god in this construction is strengthened by the fact that the altar has two nearly identical *ḥtp-dī-nswt* formula inscriptions: one that invokes Heqaib and a second that invokes the god Osiris in parallel construction. This construction is

seen again on the Thirteenth Dynasty shrine of Imeni-Iatu, son of Nebu-aa (Habachi 1985, 63: Fig. 1 f-g), though in this instance the text reads: “an offering which the king and the member of the elite, Heqaib, justified (*mꜣꜥ-hrw*), have given.” Another Thirteenth Dynasty monument, a stela of the controller of the hall, Senebhenaef, similarly invokes Heqaib in this offering formula construction, though this time Heqaib is invoked as part of a local group of gods: “An offering which the king, Satis lady of Elephantine, Anukis preeminent in Nubia, Khnum lord of the cataract region, and the member of the elite and noble (*šps*) Heqaib have given” (Habachi 1985, 69: no.43, Fig. 5a, lines 1-2). Heqaib is invoked again in this formula as *ḥkꜣ-ib šps* on the Stela of the king’s acquaintance, Nebankh (Habachi 1985, 70: no. 44). To summarize, Heqaib was included, on five occasions, in *ḥtp-di-nswt* offering formulae, both alone and alongside the other local gods of Elephantine.

### ***Evidence: Identification as ntr***

The most convincing evidence in support of Heqaib’s divine status is the fact that he was referred to explicitly as *ntr*, “god.” There are at least seven examples in which Heqaib is either directly or indirectly referred to as a god, which will be addressed below.

There are four potential instances of Heqaib being called a god on the shrine of Heqaib erected by Sarenput I (Habachi 1985, artifact no.2, plates 12-16). The first two examples, which are contextualized below, come from the façade of Heqaib’s shrine (Habachi 1985, 29: 3a). The pertinent parts of the façade of Heqaib’s shrine, namely lines 2-4 & 6, are transcribed and translated below.

2/ z3=f mry=f h3ti-<sup>c</sup> imi-r hm-ntr Z3-rnpt dd:

His beloved son, mayor, overseer of the priests, Sarenput, saying:

ink kd hwt-k3 nt iri-p<sup>c</sup>t Hk3-ib m-ht 3/ gm(=i) st w3s.ti wrt

I am the one who built the ka-chapel for the member of the elite, Heqaib, after I found it greatly ruined,

kd n=f k3r m inr <sup>c</sup>3.wy iri m <sup>c</sup>š n hntš inin hr w3t=s nbt m 4/ h3 r snnt dpt

building for him a shrine in stone, the doors being cedar of Lebanon sawed on all its sides in excess of the first plan

iri.n(=i) n=f h3 m imn(y)t m prt-hrw nt r<sup>c</sup> nb

I made for him an excess of daily offerings and of invocation offerings every day,

iri.n(=i) n=f h3 m hb(y)t r gm.t.n(=i) ir

and I made for him an excess of festival offerings more than that which I found had been done.

smnh.n(=i) htp-ntr=f

I established his god's offerings

....

6/ iw iri.n(=i) <sup>c</sup>3=f <sup>c</sup>3 m k3t mnh dd=f

I have made his great door through work excellently (so that) he would say

ii.w n iri sw prt-hrw m m3<sup>c</sup>-hrw m wd.t ntr=f niwt.y h3ty-<sup>c</sup> imi-r Z3-rnpwt

welcome to the one who made it and an invocation offering in justification by the command of his local god, namely the mayor, overseer, Sarenput.

1. At the end of the inner line (line 4) of the right hand jamb of the façade of Heqaib's shrine, Heqaib is indirectly referred to as a god in that his offerings are described as "his divine offerings." Habachi aptly notes that "here Heqaib is referred to as a god promising an invocation offering to Sarenput; such offerings are usually granted by kings or gods" (Habachi 1985, 28).

šmnh.n(=i) htp-ntr=f

"I established his divine offerings"

2. On the outer line (line 6) of the left hand jamb of the façade of Heqaib's shrine, Heqaib is referred to as a "local god."

*ḥd.t ntr=f nṯwt.y*  
“by the command of his local god”

Another two examples are found upon the outer face of the back wall of Heqaib’s shrine (Habachi 1985, 30: Fig. 3e). The entirety of the text is provided here.

1/ *ḥtp=[dī]-nswt ṯnpw dp ḏw=f imi wt nb t3-ḏsr*  
An offering that the king gives of Anubis atop his mountain, who is in the wrappings, lord of the necropolis

*dī=f prt=ḥrw t ḥnkt 2/ k3w 3pdw*  
giving an invocation offering of bread and beer (2) oxen and birds,

*ḥ3 [m šsr] ḥ3 mnḥt ḥ3 m ḥtp-ntr ḥt nbt nfr wḥb ḥnḥ.t 3/ ntr im*  
a thousand linen and a thousand cloth (pieces), and a thousand of the god’s offerings, and all good and pure things (3) upon which a god lives

*n iri-pḥt ḥ3ty-ḥtm(t)y biṯy smr wḥt ḥry-ḥbt [///]*  
for the member of the elite, mayor, royal seal bearer, sole companion, lector priest

4/ *imi-r ḥ3swt nbt imi-r 3ḥ.w ḥr št3w n dp-šmḥ 5/ Ḥk3-ib m3ḥ-ḥrw*  
(4) overseer of all foreign lands, overseer of those who speak foreign languages, and over the secrets of the head of Upper Egypt, (5) Heqaib, justified

6/ *ḥ3ty-ḥiri-r ḥm-ntr Z3-rnpwt dd*  
(6) the mayor and overseer of the priest, Sarenput, says:

*m3 m ḥr=k iri.t.n(=i) n=k*  
See with your own face, that which I have done for you

(7) *Imi iri ntr n iri n=f*  
(7) May a god act for the one who acted for him

*sw3ḥ=k rnpwt=i dp t3 sm3ḥ-ḥrw m ḥrt-ntr*  
May you make my years last upon earth, and cause that my voice be made true in the necropolis

3. In line 2-3 of the text on the back wall of the shrine above the seated figure of Heqaib there is an offering list in which the god’s offerings, what Habachi refers to as the “god’s revenues,” are included. Additionally, the offerings are described as things that make a god live, meaning the recipient of the

offerings. The recipient is clearly Heqaib who is explicitly invoked later in the text.

*ḥ3 m ḥtp-ntr ḥt nbt nfr w<sup>c</sup>b ʿnh ntr im*  
“a thousand of the god’s offerings, and all good and pure things  
upon which a god lives”

4. Also on the back wall of the shrine, in line 7, above the seated figure of Heqaib, Heqaib is petitioned to act for the one who acted for his god, namely Sarenput. Again, the god in reference here can only be Heqaib from the context.

*Imi iri ntr n iri n=f*  
“May a god act for the one who acted for him”

On a granite statue of Sarenput I (Habachi object no.3) erected in the shrine of Sarenput I at the Heqaib sanctuary an inexplicit reference to Heqaib as a god may also be found:

5. On the left side of the statue (Habachi 1985, 31: Fig. 4c) is an inscription identifying Sarenput as honored by his local god, who, Habachi correctly argues, is likely Heqaib due to the “great consideration of Sarenput for the deified Heqaib” and the statue’s location within a shrine dedicated to Heqaib in his divine form (Habachi 1985, 31).

*im3ḥ ḥr ntr=f niwt.y ḥk3 n 3bw Z3-r[n]pwt*  
“honored before his local god [is] the ruler of Elephantine,  
Sarenput”

Additional references to Heqaib as a god can be found upon some of the four large sandstone stelae erected by Sarenput I (Habachi objects no. 7-10).

6. On Sarenput I’s “Stela 9” he writes that he established a shrine for Heqaib and threatens against those who might steal food from the statue, that their god (Heqaib) will not accept the “white bread” (Habachi 1985, 36: Fig. 3, line 24).

*nn šsp ntr=f ḥd=f i(w)=f n ḥzt*  
“his god will not accept his bread, it will be to fire”

7. On Sarenput I’s “Stela 10” he addresses the *wab*-priests of Heqaib, encouraging their continued work by ensuring that the god Heqaib is not ignorant of the one who does work for him and that Heqaib will repay them (Habachi 1985, 38: Fig. 4, line 12).

*ʾI wʿb nw 10/ iri-pʿt Ḥkz-ib mr sʿḥ pn mr.t zḥ n=f*  
Oh *wab*-priests of the member of the elite, Heqaib, this *sah*-noble man likes that which one that is useful to him likes

*imz-ib srd 11/ pr=f*  
and is merciful to the one who makes his house built.

*ḥtp-ib=f m iri.tn n=f*  
His mind becomes content when you act for him

*m-ḥt is ḥtp šḥtp sw*  
For after the one who contents him goes to rest

12/ *dbʿ=f wšb=f ddt*  
He will repay his response in the necropolis.

*nṯ ḥm.n ntr šḥpr sw*  
a god is not ignorant of the one who sustains him

It is clear from the context of this text, that the “god” in reference here is Heqaib.

Heqaib is, thus, referred to as a god, both indirectly and directly, in at least seven instances upon three monuments.

## *A Discussion of the Nature of Heqaib's Divinity*

Despite this, some, such as Goedicke, are certain that we cannot speak of a deified Heqaib.<sup>60</sup> More recent scholarship, however, points to Heqaib as the earliest example of apotheosis (cf. this study: von Lieven 2010). It is worth noting that Habachi was also convinced of Heqaib's divinity. He suggests that the sanctuary of Heqaib "stood side by side with the great temple of Satis, the main goddess of the island of Elephantine" and that Heqaib was not a saint or demi-god, but a god (Habachi 1985, 165). Habachi (1985, 163) explains:

*The fact that individuals were described as beloved of Heqaib or "honored by Heqaib" shows that he was popular with some people. But being invoked alone or with other gods by other persons and having had in his Sanctuary wꜥb-priests are facts which show clearly that some, at any rate, of the attributes of a divinity were ascribed to him.*

Franke believes that the worship of Heqaib grew directly out of an elaborate mortuary cult initiated by his son Sabni (Franke 1994, 118). Habachi, however, argues that the worship of Heqaib grew from his fame as a military leader who achieved great age (Habachi 1985, 162):

*It therefore seems beyond a doubt that Heqaib, who had acquired great fame, both as a soldier and administrator, attained such an old age that he was regarded as being especially loved and estimated (sic) by the gods, and even as somewhat partaking of their divine nature, so that, when he died, he was elevated to their company and became an object of worship and prayer.*

Furthermore, Habachi makes reference to a Middle Kingdom offering table upon which Heqaib is addressed by the rare title "warrior," *ihꜣwty* (Habachi 1981, 16). Although Heqaib was described as a leader in his tomb, there is not evidence for him being called a *ihꜣwty* until the Middle Kingdom.

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<sup>60</sup> "Heqaib kann nicht von einer Vergöttlichung gesprochen werden, da kein Kult bestand" (note 14 LÄ VI, 991)

Franke identifies three aspects associated with divine attribution: cult, temple and priests. He acknowledges that these variables are not real criteria by which to answer the question “god or not god” because we know of gods who have neither a cult nor temple, but due to their involvement in “mythological constellations” no one doubts their identification (Franke 1994, 134). So while these variables (cult, temple, priesthood) are not definitive qualifiers of a god, they can be used to argue for divinity in uncertain circumstances. He also refers to these variables because others, such as Fischer (1965), have argued that these are, in fact, markers of divinity. I have addressed above the fact that priests of Heqaib are mentioned in texts, though no documentation by these priests has been discovered. The cult of Heqaib, at his sanctuary, was undoubtedly being carried out by Sarenput and is easily identifiable as ritual actions associated with divine cult (Franke 1994, 134). Franke nuances this, though, by arguing that Sarenput understood his actions as an expression of filial duty (Franke 1994, 135). The suggestion that we, as scholars, can read how Sarenput understood his actions, however, introduces problems of interpretation. It is clear, though, that the cult took place in a space (variable: temple) delineated from the profane space of the settlement.

This sacred space is referred to as the *ḥwt-kꜣ*, but never, Franke notes, is the space called a *ḥwt-nṯr*, which is the term Fischer argues is necessary for a space to be considered the locus of a divine cult (Fischer 1965, 52). The space is also, however, referred to by the term *kꜣr*, upon Sarenput’s stelae and the shrine itself, which refers to a divine shrine or naos. Contemporaneous texts suggest the typical use of this term was to refer to divine shrines within temples. A stela of Ichernofret from Abydos, for example, reads (Porter and Moss 1964, vol.V, 97; Urk. II 70-71): *msi(.w) nṯr.w imi-ḥt=f iri(.w)*



*k3r.w=sn m-m3wt di.n=I [///] wnwht-hwt-ntr r iri.t ir.t=sn* “The images of the gods who are in his following were made, and their shrines were made anew. I gave the hour priests of the temple [instructions] with respect to their tasks.”<sup>61</sup> In this excerpt, the *k3r*-shrine is associated with a *hwt-ntr* temple. That is not to say, however, that this term is exclusive to divine temples, but it is exclusive to sanctuaries. There is a single example, known from the Middle Kingdom, in which a *k3r*-shrine is described as being present in a “special room” of a tomb. This is seen in a text from Beni Hasan Tomb 3, the tomb of Khnumhotep (Porter and Moss 1964, vol. IV, 148; Newberry 1893, pl. 25-26). In the text, in lines 203-204, the author, Khnumhotep’s son, claims to have built a great door for: *k3r n ʿt šps.t ntt m-hnw iz pn* “the shrine of the special room which is in the interior of this tomb.” Even with this example, it seems suggestive that this term refers to a naos, or a locus of ritual practice. The purpose of this shrine in a tomb is unclear, though it could be an avenue for future research as it could indicate a new form of local ritual practice.

Franke suggests that “Man kann Heqaibs und Isis postumen Status mit dem eines “Heiligen” (*Agios*, *Sanctus*) vergleichen” if following H. Delehaye’s definition of “saint” that describes a saint as a servant of god who is the object of public worship (Franke 1994, 139). He suggests that Heqaib (as well as Isi) was firmly rooted in the world of the sacred and was set apart from the average dead: “Heqaib hat also deutlich Eigenschaften und Status, die über die eines verehrten Toten hinausgehen” (Franke 1994, 136). His primary role was to mediate between the living and the divine realm. Franke notes that the depictions of Heqaib at his sanctuary do not help make his identification much clearer: he is not depicted in obvious divine garb, but he is distinguished by his short,

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<sup>61</sup> Here I follow the suggested rendering of “instructions” as made available by the Thesaurus Linguae Aegyptiae, here: <http://aaew.bbaw.de/tla/servlet/GetCtxt?u=guest&f=0&l=0&db=0&tc=1211&ws=423&mv=3>

straight “divine” beard and larger scale (Franke 1994, 135). He is also beloved (*mry*), praised (*hzy*) and is distinguished in his invocation as part of formulae (*imꜣh.w hr*) reserved for kings and gods. Furthermore, Franke points out that the scenes of Sarenput offering to Heqaib are paralleled in divine temples and are not seen elsewhere in the graves or chapels of high officials (Franke, 1994, 136). Franke also makes reference to the theophoric names, such as “Heqaib is great” (*hꜣꜣ-ib-ꜣ*), that invoke Heqaib in contexts typically expected of gods. Franke suggests, though, that while Heqaib started off as a revered dead, he became a god in the Twelfth-Thirteenth Dynasty and was associated with the specific ability of mediation. Franke parallels this with other gods who are also known for specific functions such as fertility or healing. Heqaib’s origin in the human world, though, is never denied and, in fact, remained significant and apparent. Franke thus concludes that Heqaib’s worship was limited to the sanctuary on Elephantine, making him a “city god” alongside the triad of Khnum, Satet and Anuket—an assertion supported by the epigraphic evidence which clearly identifies Heqaib as a “local god” (Franke 1994, 140). Although Heqaib was a “local” god, there is evidence that travelers stopped by Heqaib’s sanctuary (Böwe 2004). Additionally, the royal sponsorship of monumental building at Heqaib’s sanctuary suggests that the cult of Heqaib was recognized by the state and was included into the national pantheon.

In addition to concepts of deification, some scholars, such as Baines, have suggested alternative notions explaining Heqaib’s elevated status. Baines argues that if any sort of deification existed it was certainly restricted to high, elite culture and the phenomenon is perhaps better understood as evidence for “role models” or “cultural heroes” (Baines 1987, 82; Baines 1991:158f). He suggests we understand these cults as

“prolonging into the next life the elite professional and institutional sphere of this life” (Baines 1991, 159). Indeed Franke similarly suggests that the invocation of dead men of “marked” status in offering formulae is initially nothing more than the transfer of the relationship between patron and follower into the Hereafter (Franke 1994, 133). The local prominence and visibility of Heqaib’s sanctuary would suggest to me, however, that Heqaib’s cult was not exclusive to elite culture or to those who benefited from Heqaib’s patronage.

### ***Conclusions***

What might have started as funerary cult performed by a son for his father was quickly elaborated and exaggerated through the erection of a cultic hall near Heqaib’s tomb. “Popular” participation—or at least participation that exceeded clear familial networks—is evidenced by the numerous burials at this cultic hall and the continued decoration of the hall’s interior (Habachi 1981, 14). Heqaib’s tomb and affiliated hall became a nucleus around which certain people of Elephantine chose to be associated. Burial shafts lining the interior of the hall were discovered empty, but a false door decoration above one of the shafts indicates that they may have been used or were intended for use (Habachi 1981, 14). Furthermore, the courtyard fronting the hall was “honeycombed” with tombs dating to the late Old Kingdom through First Intermediate Period (Habachi 1981, 14-15). The interior of his hall shows multiple stages of decoration, suggesting, “that such representations seem to have been carved over a relatively long period” (Habachi 1981, 14). In his tomb and hall, which might be called a sort of mortuary temple, Heqaib is depicted in relative large scale and is identified by his

earthly titles. He is referred to as *akh*, but not yet *ntr*. Scenes are carved within the cultic hall depicting offering bearers presenting offerings to the august Heqaib. He received great attention and was remembered as an efficacious mediator, evidenced by the numerous associated secondary burials outside his tomb. The presence of a concurrent shrine dedicated to Heqaib in a house on Elephantine Island remains unsubstantiated. Undoubtedly, by the reign of Intef III a sanctuary, *hwt-k3*, was built on Elephantine dedicated to Heqaib. Since this construction was a royal act, it is presumed that veneration of Heqaib existed in some localized form on the island prior. During the reign of Senwosret I, Sarenput re-built the sanctuary. It is from this period onward that Heqaib is explicitly identified as *ntr*, a god, and priests seem to have been active in his service.

There is great debate as to what “type” of god Heqaib was—was he a demi-god, a “true” god, or an intercessor, or saint, who was effective among the gods? Heqaib was called “god” on several occasions, a sanctuary was built in his honor, he was invoked in *htp-di-nswt* formulae and theophoric names, and evidence points to a priesthood dedicated to his cult. Thus, there is no reason not to consider Heqaib a god. Surely not a god as popular and decidedly powerful as Amun or Re, but a god nevertheless; perhaps best identified as a “local god.”

## **Chapter 4.2: Isi**

Contemporaneous with Heqaib’s apotheosis was Isi’s deification. Active cultic engagement with Isi’s cult continued, like Heqaib, through the Second Intermediate Period (Farout 2007; Farout 2009). Isi (also Izi) served as an official of Edfu spanning the reigns of King Djedkare Izezi of the Fifth Dynasty though Sixth Dynasty King Teti. Isi

carried many titles: *iri pꜣt*, *ḥꜣti-ꜥ*, *ḥri-dp ʕꜣ n spꜣt*, *shꜣ*, *zꜣb*, *ḥri-dp nswt*. Additionally, at some point late in his career (perhaps under Teti or Pepi I), or alternatively posthumously (following Franke 1994, 136), Isi was given the title of vizier, *tꜣti*. Isi's tomb is the primary locus from which evidence for his deification is known. The mastaba of Isi was excavated in 1933 by Maurice Alliot and published in 1935 in his *FIFAO Rapport sur le Fouilles de Tell Edfou*. The publication of Isi's tomb was followed by an article in the *Bulletin de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale* 37 (Alliot 1937), which discusses the evidence for Isi's apotheosis. Though Alliot's excavation focused on the superstructure of Isi's tomb, the Franco-Polish team finished the excavation of the burial shafts beginning in 1937. The site of Tell Edfu is now the site of a project directed by Nadine Moeller who is focusing, of relevance here, on the Old Kingdom settlement (Moeller 2013). A number of objects discovered at Isi's tomb, which date to the Middle Kingdom, bear inscriptions that invoke Isi as *nꜥr ʕnh*, a living god, leading to speculation as to his deification. This chapter will present and explore the evidence for Isi's apotheosis.

The clearest evidence for Isi's apotheosis is his identification as *nꜥr ʕnh* (to be discussed further below) on a number of Middle Kingdom monuments erected after the construction of his tomb. It is worth noting that, unlike Heqaib (see §4.1), Isi did not have a shrine built in his honor, separate from his tomb. Instead, his tomb became the locus for his divine cult, similar to what is presumed for Wahka. Furthermore, no priesthood is known for Isi. However, Isi is very clearly invoked as a “living god,” leaving no doubt as to his apotheosis, despite the noticeable lack of other markers of deification. Indeed, Alliot highlights that although the cult was restricted to the region of Edfu, Isi's cult was

public and the acts of devotion were the same as those intended for “real” (*veritables*) gods (Alliot 1937, 139). Marée, however, provides convincing evidence that could suggest the cult of Isi was at least known outside of Edfu. Marée asserts that there is “no doubt” that a stela (Warsaw 141265), which was discovered at Isi’s mastaba and invoked his deified form by a man also named Isi, originated from a “well-attested” Abydene workshop (Marée 2009, 38). He also links this workshop to an altar commissioned for the cult of Heqaib at Elephantine (Marée 2009, 39).

In the inner rooms of Isi’s mastaba, a number of objects were found: twenty-two stelae, four offering tables, one statue, a three-slab naos, a fragment of a second naos, and two door jambs of a chapel (Alliot 1937, 136, no.1). Many of these explicitly invoke Isi, and will be described below, but some do not. Because of the damage present on these, Alliot suggests that this may be a factor of preservation and in their original forms Isi’s name might have been present (Alliot 1937, 136). However, it is also worth considering another possibility: the tomb of Isi could have become increasingly popular as an effective place of communication with the divine Hereafter. For example, some letters to the dead would have been buried or interred as close to the intended recipient(s), but not necessarily in their tomb, because the act of burial and the association of the tomb was enough to enhance its communicative abilities. As a “living god,” Isi was particularly accessible to the local community, and his tomb, thus, became recognized as a liminal, sacred space in which the divine realm could be easily reached—similar to what was happening contemporaneously at temples. This would explain, then, why a number of artifacts were deposited here and dedicated to other gods in addition to the deified Isi.

### *Epigraphic Evidence*

Those artifacts that include a reference to Isi are numerous. Isi is primarily invoked as a “living god,” *ntr ʿnh*, in inscriptions as part of a *hṯp-di-nswt* offering formula (see TABLE 7); he is sometimes invoked by himself, but also with Horus, patron god of Edfu, and Osiris. In the two instances in which Isi is not invoked in this offering formula, he is described as a god who loves the owner of an offering table and as a god in whose following is the owner of a certain stela.

Isi is invoked fourteen times as a “living god” upon ten monuments commissioned by at least six different people from Dynasty XII through XIII.<sup>62</sup> Additionally, there are two examples that are not very clear, but may invoke Isi as a god. In Alliot’s Text no. 22 the phrase “living god” is clear, but the name “Isi” is not (Alliot 1937, 109). In Alliot’s Text no. 31, which Alliot questionably identifies as a wall fragment, the name Isi is inscribed, but it is unclear in what context—whether as an invocation of the god Isi, part of a theophoric name, or part of a personal name (see “Onomastic Evidence” below).

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<sup>62</sup> Alliot identifies characteristics of late-Eleventh Dynasty/Twelfth Dynasty stelae in Text no. 9 and no. 11. I am convinced, though, by Marée’s argument for a Twelfth Dynasty, reign of Senwosret I, dating based on some orthographic trends, such as the spelling of *Ddw* with two “d” phonetic complements and the syntactical construction *ir.n* “made by” to communicate maternal lineage, for which the earliest known attestation dates to the reign of Senwosret I (Marée 2009, 35).

TABLE 7: Known attestations of Isi's epithet <i>ntr ʕnh</i>		
Object	Invocation	Reference
Statue of <i>Nb-īt</i>	<i>ḥtp-dī-nswt ʾIsi ntr ʕnh</i> (x2)	Alliot (1937) Text no.6
Offering Table of <i>Nb-īt</i>	<i>mri ʾIsi siḥ tẓti ntr ʕnh mꜣꜥ ḥrw</i>	Alliot (1937) Text no.7
Stela of <i>Ḥr-...</i>	<i>ḥtp-dī-nswt ʾIsi ntr ʕnh</i>	Alliot (1937) Text no.11
Stela of <i>Ḥr-ꜣ &amp; Ḥr-ḥtp</i>	<i>ḥtp-dī-nswt ʾIsi sꜥḥ tẓti ʾIs(i) ntr ʕnh</i>	Alliot (1937) Text no.13
Stela of <i>Wsr-ḥẓtīw</i>	<i>wnny m šm n Ḥr ʾIsi ntr ʕnh</i>	Alliot (1937) Text no.14
Stela of <i>Ḥr-ꜣ</i>	<i>ḥtp-dī-nswt Wsir nb Ḍdw ntr [ꜣ] n [ẓbḏw ʾIsi ntr] ʕnh</i>	Alliot (1937) Text no.17
Slab (left) of Naos of <i>Ḥr-ꜣ</i>	<i>ḥtp-dī-nswt ʾIzi sꜥḥ tẓti ʾIzi ntr ʕnh</i>	Alliot (1937) Text no.30
Slab (left) of Naos of <i>Ḥr-ꜣ</i>	<i>ḥtp-dī-nswt ʾIzi sꜥḥ tẓti ʾIz(i) ntr ʕnh</i>	Alliot (1937) Text no.30
Slab (right) of Naos of <i>Ḥr-ꜣ</i>	<i>ḥtp-dī-nswt ʾIzi sꜥḥ tẓti ʾIz(i) ntr ʕnh</i> (x2)	Alliot (1937) Text no.30
Offering Table of <i>ʾIb-iꜥ</i>	<i>ḥtp-dī-nswt ʾIsi ntr ʕnh</i>	Alliot (1937) Text no.34
Stela of Mesu	[1] <i>ḥtp-dī-nswt Ḥr-bḥd.ti Wsir</i> [2] <i>nb-ḏd(w) {ntr} ʾIsi &lt;ntr&gt; ʕnh</i>	Cairo JE 46786
Stela of Iuf	[1] <i>ḥtp-dī-nswt Ḥr-bḥd.tj Wsjr nb-ḏd(w)</i> [2] <i>ntr ꜣ nb pt {ntr} ʾIsi</i>	Cairo JE 63949

### Commentary

Isi's divine determination is further solidified by the seated divine figure present after the epithet “living god” in one instance (Statue of Nebit, Alliot Text no. 6). The inscription upon an offering table (Alliot Text no.7) of the same man, Nebit, similarly invokes Isi as a “living god” and a *siḥ*, which, is a confirmed, by the Wörterbuch, alternative variant of *sꜥḥ* “dignitary, noble,” (Alliot 1937, 13, no. 2; Wb VIII, 40). Notably, Alliot translates this as “saint.” Marée, however, more plausibly suggests that this translation is “overly specific” (Marée 2009, 35), pointing to instances in which the phrase is used in reference to a collective of nobles without any indication of their otherwise being deified. What the term *sꜥḥ* does clearly indicate is an individual of



elevated status, which is appropriate for someone who is being marked as divine, but not necessarily a marker of that divinity. Alliot again translates *sḥ* as “saint” in his Text no. 9 (Warsaw 141264), which dates to the late-Eleventh or Twelfth Dynasty (Alliot 1937, 130). Though this stela was discovered in the chapel of Isi’s mastaba, the phrase is not enough to include it as evidence of Isi’s deification, though its provenance does suggest that Isi was exalted as an individual of elevated status after his death, perhaps by the late Eleventh Dynasty. In either case, it is possible that this stela provides evidence for the gradual growth of Isi’s cult.

In three instances, Isi is invoked in an offering formula with other gods. Upon the stela of *Hr-ḥ* he is invoked in the second position, with Osiris taking first position, with a fully articulated epithet. The stela of Mesu (JE 46786), dating to either the Thirteenth or Seventeenth Dynasty, invokes Isi as part of an offering formula that also includes Horus of Behdet and Osiris, lord of Abydos, in the first and second positions, with Isi coming last (Engelbach 1921, 65-66). The stela of Iuf, of uncertain date,<sup>63</sup> includes a nearly identical invocation of Isi as part of a larger offering formula additionally calling upon Horus Behdet and Osiris, “lord of Abydos, great god, lord of the sky” (Engelbach 1922, 114-115). Interestingly, Isi can be invoked alone, but when clustered with other gods, he always takes the final, and most subordinate, position. To be fair, he is only ever clustered with Horus, the local patron city god, and Osiris, for whom an immense cult at Abydos existed. Thus, it may speak more to his elevated status that he is allowed to be included alongside these two prominent gods.

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<sup>63</sup> Engelbach does not give a suggested dating, but Franke (1994, 84-85) has suggested a potential Seventeenth Dynasty dating.

### ***Onomastic Evidence***

Onomastics provide the second line of evidence for Isi's deification. The personal name Isi is known elsewhere from the Old Kingdom—for example, Stockholm Stela 29 (Lieblein 1871, 23). All attestations indicate that Isi was a common, private person's name and was not associated with any deity at Edfu (Engelbach 1922, 137). Additionally, the personal name Isi is known from at least four sources that are roughly contemporaneous with the deification of Isi of Edfu: a Middle Kingdom Wadi Hammamat inscription (Couvât 1912, 64-66), a stela dating to the reign of Sobekhotep IV (Alliot 1935, 19), a Thirteenth Dynasty statue from the cemetery at Edfu now in the Louvre, E.14330 (Delange 1987, 72-75), and an unprovenanced, Second Intermediate Period stela known from a private collection (Engelbach 1922, 122-123). Upon the right-side slab of the above mentioned naos of Hor-aa, we see written the name of a "justified" man called "*Isi-n-pr*," which Alliot identifies as an example of a theophoric name using the name of the god Isi (Alliot 1937, 113, no.5). This construction, though, is not included in Vittmann's list of theophoric naming patterns, but it is also very rare and I do not know of another name that follows this pattern exactly (Vittmann 2013b). Thus, whether this is a theophoric name is unclear. Certainly, it invokes Isi and speaks to his local fame. There are two names, though, that clearly invoke Isi in theophoric patterns: *z3t-Isi*, and *Isi-ntr*. The name *z3t-Isi*, is known from an Edfu stela (entry no. 16.2.22.21), and follows Vittmann's theophoric pattern number six (Vittmann 2013b, 4).<sup>64</sup> Indeed, Engelbach also included it in his discussion of such names (Engelbach 1922, 137). The

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<sup>64</sup> Vertical column 1 reads: *z3t=f z3-Isi m3t hrw*

reading of the second theophoric name that invokes Isi is unclear: the name is “*Isi-ntr*” or “*ntr-Isi*” (Ranke PN I, 46: 8; PN II, 344: 46,8). This name could be understood in a number of ways, all of which suggest some sort of divine association: (1) As an A-B nominal sentence “Isi is (a/the) god” or “The god is Isi”; (2) Apposition “The god, Isi”; (3) Adjectival sentence “Isi is divine.” In any case, *z3t-Isi*, and *Isi-ntr* are both definitive examples of theophoric names invoking Isi in his divinized form.

### ***Living God, ntr ‘nh***

It is worth noting that Isi is consistently referred to as a “living god,” whereas Heqaib is typically referred to as simply a “god.” This raises the question—is this distinction theologically and/or philosophically meaningful? I can postulate two reasons for the ascription of the title “living god” to Isi: (1) This is a reflex of the particular cultural milieu of Edfu at this time. Isi was at some point described or imagined as a “living god” and this term became embedded in cultural memory to the point where it would be exclusively used as his epithet. While this may have its origins in a theological articulation of the nature of Isi’s divinity, by the time the monuments are erected in the Middle Kingdom it could have become standardized and normalized. (2) The title says something very specific about how Isi’s divinity is imagined and communicated, which may be distinct from other deified dead.

These two options are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Additionally, because of the great similarities between Heqaib and Isi—both Old Kingdom officials who were celebrated as gods by their local communities into the Middle Kingdom—it seems worth exploring. So, if the term “living god” carries some significant philosophical weight,

what might this be? To answer this, I look to other textual references to “living god” in an attempt to discern if there is a particular connotation associated with the epithet.

In the Pyramid Texts, the dead king is described as living together with the gods, but it is not until the Middle Kingdom that we see “living” being used to modify “god.” According to the *Lexikon Der Ägyptischen Götter Und Götterbezeichnungen* the phrase is an attested epithet for gods, those who were always gods, and transfigured beings, those who were once alive and are later described as gods by nature of their transfigured status (Leitz *et al.* 2002: v.4, 417). Some examples of note from the Middle Kingdom include the attestation of the phrase “living god” upon Middle Kingdom sarcophagi, in which it identifies what Alliot refers to as a “funerary genie” in the form of a snake or vulture (Alliot 1937, 135). Beni-Hasan Tomb 2 also provides evidence for the use of the phrase as a proper name (Alliot 1937, 135). In the main chamber, along the north wall of the tomb, a row of thirteen attendants stand in uniform dress and posture before King Amenemhat, identified by their role and name. One of these attendants is the “overseer” (*imi-r*) of the hall (*ʿryt*), named Netjerankh (Newberry 1893, 16 & pl.xiii). Nothing else is known of this figure or discernable from the funerary texts or painting, but the association between the name Netjerankh and a hall is intriguing given later texts’ association between the “living god” and one who has effectively passed the judgment of Osiris in the hall of judgment.

We see this in the *Debate between a Man and His Ba*, a text that is roughly contemporaneous with the deification of Isi (Allen 2011). In this text, one who has successfully reached the Hereafter is identified as a “living god” in the man’s fourth litany: *wnn ms nti im m ntr ʿnh*, “Surely, he who is there will be a living god” (col. 142-

143). Though a much later example, this seems to also be how the phrase is understood in Papyrus Amherst 3, lines 142-143: *wnn ms ntī im m ntr ʿnh hr ḥsf iw n irr sw* (Amherst *et al* 1899, 1). It is perhaps made most explicit, though, in pLondon (British Museum EA 10793), a fragment from a Book of the Dead papyrus made for Panedjem, a Twenty-first Dynasty high priest of Amun. In it (lines 2,5-6) he claims: *ph.n=i mr n mʿtī ḥʿi.kw m ntr ʿnh psd.kw m psd.t imi(t) pt*, “I have reached the channel of the Dual Maat apparent as a living god and shining as the Ennead who are in the sky” (Munro 1996). Comparably, we see the dead invoked as a “god who lives forever (*r-nḥḥ*) and was made great (*sʿʿ.w*) in the West” in two examples known from the Theban tombs, both of which date to the New Kingdom.<sup>65</sup> The Ptolemaic Book of the Dead papyrus of Iuefankh (pTurin Museo Egizio 1791) also describes the dead at the judgment in this way (BD 1, 17): *ḥʿi.kw m ntr ʿnh*, “I appear as a living god” (Lepsius 1842). Thus, the phrase “living god” seems to have been reserved for descriptions of dead who have effectively passed through the judgment and exist in the Hereafter.

Based primarily on the use of the phrase “living god” in the *Debate between a Man and His Ba*, Franke identifies three characteristics of the “living god,” which he concludes are in fact characteristics of those who act according to *maat*: the living god (1) protects Re or Osiris against their enemies as they (2) sit together in the solar barque, which allows him to (3) have the ear of the god, enabling him to make appeals on behalf of the living (Franke 1994, 137). He associates these virtues with the king and high officials, thus, suggesting that Isi (and Heqaib) held a special status, beyond that of *akh*, as an official to Re in their divinized forms (Franke 1994, 138). Indeed, Franke makes no

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<sup>65</sup> Nearly identical examples are known from TT 32 (Djehutimose) and TT 50 (Neferhotep): *tī sw m ntr ʿnh.w r-nḥḥ sʿʿ.w m imn.t*

fundamental distinction between Heqaib as *ntr* and Isi as *ntr ʕnh*. He describes them both as *schutzheilige* and *Fürbitter*—sacred protectors and intercessors (Franke 1994, 139). But the term “intercessor” is not convincingly ideal for either. An intercessor is one who prays or petitions (usually to a god) on behalf of another. This regulates Isi to the role of mediator between the living and the gods. Instead, it seems clear that the stelae, statues and offering tables invoke Isi as a god himself, and are not simply invoking him as a messenger to the gods (which is, indeed, the role of an *ʕh ikr n Rʕ*).

It is further important to note that the term *ʕnh*, though translated as “alive” or “living,” is not limited to corporeal living. In other words, one could be physically dead, but still an “alive” being in Egyptian philosophy. This is best exemplified by references to living (*ʕnh*) and dead (*mt*) spirits (*ʕh* or *bʕ*).<sup>66</sup> Thus, the ancient Egyptian term *ʕnh* referred more to one’s social and/or religious efficacy than to the beating of one’s heart. To reference again Pyramid Text 213, upon death one did not go away dead but alive. Applying this understanding of *ʕnh* then to the phrase *ntr ʕnh*, the “living god” was one that was seen as particularly effective and present within social networks of the living. This term is ideal for describing a divinized dead whose humanity was very much “alive” within the cultural memory of local communities. It also could be a way to emphasize the god in his social role, as one who listens to prayers and is engaged with the living. Indeed, it is worth mentioning that Imhotep, who is celebrated as a god and son of Ptah from the New Kingdom through the Roman Period (Wildung 1977), is also invoked as a “living god” in a Ptolemaic inscription from Hatshepsut’s mortuary temple at Deir el-Bahri (Laskowska-Kusztal 1984, 26.1-26.2). In this inscription he is described as a living

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<sup>66</sup> e.g. PT 260: *sk UNAS pri m hrw pn m ir.w mʕ n(.i) ʕh.i ʕnh*, “Unas has gone out on this day in true form of a living *akh*”; e.g. pTurin Museo Egizio 1791 BD 114-165: *iw Wsir -NN- mʕ hrw hʕi(.w) m bʕ ʕnh n Rʕ m pt*, “Osiris, NN, justified, has appeared as the living *ba* of Re in the sky.”

god who hears voices and gladdens the hearts of the gods. Though not a contemporary of Isi—either in life or in his divinized form—Imhotep’s description as a “living god” may be engaging with similar social constructs, since it seems as if the phrase “living god” is used in comparable contexts from the Middle Kingdom through the Roman Period.

### ***Conclusions***

Evidence clearly supports the identification of Isi as a god by the Twelfth Dynasty. Isi is invoked in offering formulae and in theophoric name constructions, and his tomb became a shrine to his divinized form. Most compelling is his identification as a “living god” on numerous monuments, dedicated by various individuals, which speaks to the ubiquity of Isi’s cult at Edfu, and possibly within the greater region as far as Abydos.

### **Chapter 4.3: Wahka**

Wahka is unique from the cases of Heqaib and Isi. Heqaib and Isi were both Sixth Dynasty officials whose apotheosis likely occurred generations after their death. Wahka, on the other hand, was a Middle Kingdom official whose deification was quickly realized. How quick is impossible to say since Wahka’s identity remains elusive. A number of massive tombs and artifacts at the cemetery of Qau (also Qaw) el-Kebir provide evidence for tombs of three *hꜣti-ꜥ*, mayors, who were named Wahka (I), Ibu, and Wahka (II).<sup>67</sup> A fourth, smaller tomb of mayor Sobekhotep is also known from the area,

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<sup>67</sup> It is worth noting that the cemetery of Qau el-Kebir is the location of the only Letter to the Dead with a definitive findspot (Brunton 1927, 37). The letter, known as the Qau Bowl, dates to the First Intermediate Period (University College London 16163). Two letters written to Shepsi’s father and mother are written, respectively, upon the inside and outside of this red, ceramic bowl (Gardiner and Sethe 1928, 3-5, 17-19).

but remains largely unpublished and its exact dating is unknown. No king's name was discovered in any of the mayors' tombs, but dating based on artistic criteria is possible, though still heavily debated. The Middle Kingdom cemetery of Qau el-Kebir was excavated by Petrie who published, in 1930, a report whose historical interpretations are now out-of-date. A more reliable resource is the 1936 publication by Steckeweh, Grajetzki's 2012 University of California Online Encyclopedia of Egyptology article, which provides an overview to the site's entire history, and Martelli re's 2008 article, which adds to our current understanding of the dating of the tombs. Grajetzki has most recently dated the tomb of Wahka I to the reign of Amenemhat II, while Martelli re had dated the tomb of Wahka II to the reign of Senwosret III (Martelli re 2008; Grajetzki 2012, 6). A stela known from Stockholm identifies a third Wahka who was mayor during the reign of Amenemhat III, but for whom no tomb is known (Steckeweh 1936, 7). Additionally, a number of other mayors of the area are known from artifact inscriptions, but their tombs have not yet been located (Grajetzki 2012, 7).

The tombs of Wahka I, Ibu, and Wahka II are notable for their incredible size, being among the largest known from the Middle Kingdom. The largest of the mayors' tombs belonged to Wahka II (Sauerbier 2006). They are also worthy of attention, because their architecture is similar in form to Old Kingdom royal mortuary complexes, with gateways fronting long causeways which lead to elaborate chapels and rock cut tombs (see various plans in Steckeweh 1936). This appropriation of royal architecture indicates that these mayors received a special status in life that allowed for monumental display of their social capital which transcended life with them in death. The numerous tombs of

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The presence of the letter to the dead and the extraordinarily prominent tombs may suggest that the local dead were especially venerated in this region, priming it for the apotheosis of Wahka.



local high officials that cluster around these three prominent tombs further this notion. Unfortunately, the dating of these tombs are highly problematic, though they likely date to either the First Intermediate Period or Middle Kingdom (Grajetzki 2012, 7). Pottery sequencing suggests an earlier date, but their clustering suggests the later dating, because their clustering would presuppose something around which to cluster (e.g. the mayor's tombs). Brunton hypothesized that this region's pottery production was significantly more conservative, conserving First Intermediate Period forms into the Middle Kingdom and, thus, throwing off the dating of the tombs (Brunton 1930, 2). Indeed, Seidlmayer's study of the First Intermediate Period confirms Brunton hypothesis, noting that forms across Egypt were codified only in the mid-Twelfth Dynasty (Seidlmayer 1990, 348-397).

Two pieces of evidence indicate that one of the Wahka mayors was deified: inclusion in a *ḥtp-di-nswt* offering formula upon an Abydene stela and a second stela now in Stockholm, and a possible theophoric name on a seal impression from Wah-Sut. Problematically, it is impossible with the extant evidence to definitively identify which Wahka is being invoked in the offering formulae and the seal impression. Stela CCG 20549 was discovered in North Abydos at the so-called "Terrace of the Great God" (Simpson 1974, 19, pl.41; Wegner 2010). At the top of this elaborate family stela Wahka is invoked in a *ḥtp-di-nswt* offering formula, in the primary (first) position. Similarly, a stela now in Stockholm also invokes Wahka in a *ḥtp-di-nswt* formula, in the second position following Ptah-Sokar (Steckeweh 1936, 7). This is a remarkable occurrence, since the *ḥtp-di-nswt* formula exclusively called upon the gods. This is the most compelling evidence in favor of Wahka's apotheosis.

Additionally, a seal impression discovered at the nearby settlement of Wah-Sut in Abydos South provides evidence of a theophoric name invoking Wahka. This broken Middle Kingdom sealing is inscribed: *imi-r pr W3h-k3* ///. The end of the seal is broken, but there appears (see image and linedrawing in Wegner 2010, 455) to be two signs: a *ntr* sign in the lower right, and a seated man beside it (Wegner 2010, 455 fig.5). The *ntr* sign would then be a determinative, epithet, or part of a personal name unattested elsewhere (see also the name Isi-*ntr* in §4.2).<sup>68</sup> This name is likely, then, a personal name, which simply repeats the name of a god, in this case “Wahka” with a divine determinative. Examples of this sort of name are known from the Middle Kingdom (Vittmann 2013b, 4). Alternatively the name could be either an A-B nominal sentences “Wahka is (a/the) god,” or “the god is Wahka,” or in apposition, “the god, Wahka.” If the reconstruction of the *ntr* sign is correct, and I do not see what else it could be, then this is evidence of a theophoric name.

## ***Conclusions***

Admittedly, there are a number of concerns with the evidence presented here, most of all the inability to definitively identify which Wahka is invoked on either the offering formulae or the seal impression. The inclusion of Wahka in offering formulae is irrefutable evidence that Wahka was perceived as a god in his capacity as a benefactor of funerary offerings. Because the *hṯp-di-nswt* formula often invokes the god who was most

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<sup>68</sup> For attested compound Wahka names see Ranke 1935, 73-74, none of which seem to be theophoric names.

prominent within the local cemetery, it would make sense for Wahka II to be the intended mayor since his tomb was the largest at Qau el-Kebir, though this is just a hypothesis. It is furthermore difficult to date the evidence in support of Wahka's apotheosis. It can definitively be dated to the Middle Kingdom based on excavated context and style. A more definitive date than that, however, remains elusive. If my suggestion that Wahka II is the intended recipient of this worship, then a late Middle Kingdom date for his apotheosis might be most appropriate. Additionally, the case of Wahka is unique from Heqaib and Isi because his apotheosis occurred, presumably, later in the Middle Kingdom and because he was a Twelfth Dynasty official whereas Isi and Heqaib were Sixth Dynasty officials. I suggest, though, that the process of apotheosis observed with Heqaib and Isi is the same we see with Wahka. Although later in date, Wahka was a revered member of his local community, which extended from Qau el-Kebir to Abydos. His tomb illustrates the reach of his power during life and his deified status in death.

#### **Chapter 4.4: Summary**

In the Middle Kingdom apotheosis occurred exclusively in the provinces, away from royal restrictions on the display of social capital. Alternatively, in the Old Kingdom apotheosis existed within royal power networks that began to change at the end of the Old Kingdom. In the Middle Kingdom, though, the rise of apotheosis was initially extremely local, intimately connected to local temple structures of power that rose in prominence in the late Old Kingdom concurrent to a growth in regionalism. The onset of

the Middle Kingdom motivated the explicit and popular articulation of cults to local deified dead as a means of conserving local power networks, a practice which continued through the Twelfth Dynasty as demonstrated by the case of Wahka. As the cult of Heqaib grew in importance, kings of the Twelfth Dynasty, beginning with Senwosret I, began to include Heqaib's sanctuary into their national temple building programs. This action could be interpreted as either a tacit approval of the local cult, or an attempt control the local systems of influence that surrounded Heqaib's cult, which were potentially threatening royal power networks.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: DISTINGUISHED DEAD**

Chapter Two described average dead, and Chapters Three and Four have presented evidence for dead who underwent apotheosis and were conceptualized as gods sometime after their deaths. Somewhere between these two extremes were individuals who possessed attributes that distinguished them as particularly effective, but not quite divine. Specifically this chapter will consider the cases of Hordjedef, Ptahhotep and the governors of ‘Ain Asil.

TABLE 8: Cases of Old-Middle Kingdom distinguished dead			
Name	Date of Life/Death	Date of Distinction	Location
Ptahhotep	Dynasty V, Isesi	Late OK/FIP ?	Saqqara
Hordjedef	Dynasty IV	Dynasty VI, Pepi I	Giza
Governors of ‘Ain Asil	Dynasty VI, Pepi II	Dynasty VI, Pepi II	Dakhla Oasis

There are a number of Old Kingdom officials named Ptahhotep, and it is difficult to say with certainty (fully discussed below) whether Ptahhotep I (Tomb D 62) or Ptahhotep II (Tomb D 64) was the object of local veneration, but it was likely the Ptahhotep to whom authorship of a didactic text was also attributed (Hassan 1975). Hordjedef and Ptahhotep were both authors attributed to wisdom texts, which were part of the ancient Egyptian didactic literary tradition. They were also both included in New Kingdom lists of “great writers” of the past (Chester Beatty IV; pHarris 500 “Harper’s Song”), and Hordjedef was additionally invoked in another list known from Papyrus Athens (National Library, Athens, P. Nr 1826; Fischer-Elfert 2002; Fischer-Elfert 2003,

129). This clearly indicates that they were venerated in popular memory, which has led some scholars to suggest that they were deified (Junker 1944; Wildung 1977; Baines 1987; Franke 1994). It is, indeed, possible that they were, but there is not enough evidence to support this suggestion. Hordjedef was, additionally, included in an *imꜣh.w hr* formula, which, as discussed in Chapter 1.2a, was an honor reserved for gods, kings, and distinguished dead, but not proof of deification on its own. Ptahhotep may have been deified, but unfortunately evidence in support of this assertion, which was originally made by Selim Hassan, is not published in its entirety. Evidence in support of the unique statuses of the governors at the Dakhla Oasis is predominantly architectural. Large *hwt-kꜣ* chapels were erected in their honor as a gift of the king, and were conserved and re-built over numerous generations. These chapels have been compared to Heqaib's sanctuary, which was also a *hwt-kꜣ*.

The evidence provided in this chapter illustrates that posthumous status was dynamic and likely existed along a spectrum of distinction that ranged from *akh* to *netjer*. As more evidence potentially emerges, my interpretation of these individuals could change. This chapter most basically presents inconclusive cases that may indicate that apotheosis was a process that built upon changing levels of posthumous distinction that occurred within a community. Evidence associated with Djefai-Hapi I, which has already been presented in the introduction, could signify that this was not a spontaneous act and could even have been orchestrated before one's death (Kahl 2012, 163-188). The multiple generations of chapels built at 'Ain Asil also signal that the governors may have intentionally encouraged the extension of their cult beyond their mortuary rites.

## Chapter 5.1: Hordjedef

Hordjedef (also Djedefhor) was a Fourth Dynasty prince,<sup>69</sup> who was the son of King Khufu. He was buried at Giza (Tomb G 7210/7220) in the Eastern cemetery near his father's great pyramid (Junker 1944; Junker 1947). Hordjedef's distinction was not as fully articulated as the gods discussed in this study in the previous two chapters. When considered in its entirety, the evidence surrounding Hordjedef's posthumous status suggests he was distinguished among the dead. He is associated with *imꜣh.w hr* formulae known from two Sixth Dynasty false doors, those of Kha and Ptahiufni, discovered nearby his Giza mastaba (respectively: Goedicke 1958 and Strudwick 1988; Junker 1944, 25-28 and Ritter 1999, 44). Additionally, two artifacts suggest that his name may have been popular among Sixth Dynasty Memphite locals.<sup>70</sup> Finally, epigraphic and literary evidence indicates that Hordjedef was venerated within social memory.<sup>71</sup>

### *The Funerary Evidence*

Two funerary monuments of craftsmen are known from the Giza cemetery nearby Hordjedef's mastaba, the false doors of Kha and Ptahiufni. Hordjedef, himself, held the position of Director of the Works, which may point to his role as a sort of patron of

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<sup>69</sup> Reisner and Ritter (*inter alia*) have argued that Hordjedef was king for a short period between Khafre and Menkaure (Reisner 1931, 243-246; Ritter 1999). The evidence for this comes from a Wadi Hammamat inscription that lists Hordjedef's name in a cartouche followed by the suffix *rꜥ*. This suffix is known from the Fourth Dynasty, but becomes nearly ubiquitous in the Fifth Dynasty. This evidence however could merely indicate Hordjedef's revered status within Middle Kingdom social memory—just as Osiris and other gods were included in king lists as part of a fictional past. In any case, because the evidence for Hordjedef's kingship is founded upon a single non-contemporaneous source, I am treating Hordjedef as treated here as a prince and not as a king (since kings are not included in this study otherwise).

<sup>70</sup> False door of Hordjedef Iteti (MFA 29-2-37a) and Offering Table of Hordjedef Iteti (RC 1684) both in Van de Walle 1977.

<sup>71</sup> Specifically: (1) Wadi Hammamat "Kings List" Inscription (Dodson and Hilton 2004, 50-61; Drioton 1954); (2) Teaching of Hordjedef (Brunner-Traut 1940; Assmann 1991); (3) References to great writers of the past—Chester Beatty IV (Gardiner 1935) and the Harper's Song from Papyrus Harris 500 (Fox 1977).

craftsmen. The limestone false door of Kha (MFA 25.1514, originally 25-1-319) was discovered reused in a Sixth Dynasty shaft (G 7211 B) of the Fifth Dynasty tomb of Kaemankh (G 7211). Ritter dates this monument to “a little later” than the false door of Ptahiufni, discussed below (Ritter 1999, 44). Among the list of titles upon his false door, Kha is identified as *dwꜣ(w) Hrꜣdf imꜣḥ.w ḥꜣ*, “Adorer of Hordjedef, favored one, Kha.” I do not know yet of another instance in which one is described as being an adorer of another private person (instead of a god or the king). While Hordjedef here is not invoked in the *imꜣḥ.w ḥꜣ* formula, the inscription could be understood as suggesting that it was because of Kha’s role as an adorer of Hordjedef, that he was *imꜣḥ*. In any case, it is clear from this inscription that Hordjedef was revered enough to have a local man proclaim prominently upon his false door his title of adorer.

The false door of Ptahiufni explicitly invokes Hordjedef in an *imꜣḥ.w ḥꜣ* formula. This Sixth Dynasty (reign of Pepi I) false door was discovered in Giza mastaba G 4941, presumed to be Ptahiufni’s, and was originally published in Junker’s *Giza VII* (1944, 25-28). The false door (Leipzig 3134) is now unfortunately lost, according to Porter and Moss,<sup>72</sup> but a photograph is included online in the Giza Archives<sup>73</sup> and a line drawing is preserved in Junker’s *Giza VII* (page 25, Abb.8). Across the false door’s lintel a hieroglyphic inscription reads: *imꜣḥ.w ḥꜣ Hrꜣdf šps*, “favored by the august Hordjedef.” Junker suggests that Hordjedef was deified (*vergöttlicht*) or enjoyed a religious cult (*oder wenigstens einen religiösen Kult genoss*) as indicated by his inclusion in the formula (Junker 1944, 26). I suggest that Hordjedef’s inclusion in the *imꜣḥ.w ḥꜣ* formula is not

<sup>72</sup> According to Porter and Moss (Volume III Part I, page 143): “upper part of false-door of deceased, found in fragments, in Leipzig Mus. Inv. 3134 (lost).”

<sup>73</sup> <http://www.gizapyramids.org/view/people/asitem/SiteAncients@1162/0?t:state:flow=2a558375-629d-4c0b-a8a3-efc33b9aeb03>



enough to definitively assume he underwent apotheosis, but rather it reveals that Hordjedef possessed a unique posthumous status within his community and in the necropolis. Junker rightfully points out, though, that the destruction of the inscriptions, which date to the First Intermediate Period, in his tomb complicates our understanding of his social remembrance (Junker 1944, 26). Other evidence—such as his inclusion in lists of great writers—implies, to the contrary, that his memory was preserved in a positive light at least into the Ramesside Period (see below).

### ***Onomastic Evidence***

A number of individuals, for whom there is no evidence to suggest that they were related to Hordjedef, possessed the name Hordjedef, as a sign of reverence. These names date to the end of the Old Kingdom and are all clustered in the Memphite region, suggesting his fame was initially localized (cf. “Epigraphic Evidence” below). Goedicke first brought attention to this phenomenon when he noted Reisner’s discovery of a false door of a man named Hordjedef, whose nickname is Iteti, near the tomb of the sons of Khufu (G 7240).<sup>74</sup> This false door (MFA 29-2-37) was originally part of an intrusive funerary chapel that dates to the late Old Kingdom (van der Walle 1977, 18). The false door owner, Hordjedef, holds the titles of *šps-nswt*,<sup>75</sup> “noble of the king” and *smr pr* “colleague of the house.”<sup>76</sup> Upon the left jamb of the false door, the deceased owner is identified as *Hrddf*, which is paralleled by the right jamb upon reading, *rn=f nfr Itti* “whose good name is Iteti.” This “nickname” allows identification of the Hordjedef of

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<sup>74</sup> Goedicke 1958a, 47, n.2

<sup>75</sup> For a discussion of this title see Edel 1960, 12-15

<sup>76</sup> For a discussion of this title see Goedicke 1958b, 21 and Goedicke 1961, 69-90.

this false door as the owner of a second artifact, an offering table (RC 1684) now housed in the Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum of San Jose (van de Walle 1977, 20). The offering table has five lines of text identifying the owner as *shd-sh3 Hrdjdf im3h.w hr ntr 3 Itti* “Inspector of the scribes, Hordjedef, one favored by the great god, Iteti” (van de Walle 1977, 22). The offering table is unprovenanced, as it was acquired via the antiquities market, and is thus impossible to securely ascribe it to the Memphite region apart from the evidence provided by the names. Additionally, the titles of Hordjedef’s false door differ from those on the offering table of Hordjedef, which could suggest that there were two distinct individuals with this same name (van de Walle 1977, 24). Van de Walle, however, advocates for the identification of the owner of these two artifacts as the same Hordjedef Iteti; he explains that the small size of the funerary chapel could have dictated the choice for not duplicating titles, or that the offering table could represent a later stage of Hordjedef’s career (van de Walle 1977, 24).

### ***Epigraphic Evidence for Distinction in Social Memory***

Despite the destruction of Hordjedef’s tomb during the First Intermediate Period, textual evidence indicates that he was revered into the New Kingdom. Three pieces of evidence are most enlightening: Hordjedef’s inclusion in a Wadi Hammamat list of kings, his inclusion in lists of great writers, and the attribution of a piece of wisdom literature to him. An inscription in the Wadi Hammamat is an example of a sort of king list; it lists the names of Khufu, Djedefre, Khafre, Hordjedef, and Baufre, all encircled in cartouches (Dodson and Hilton 2004, 54-55). Reisner has argued that this indicates that Hordjedef and his brother Baufre reigned shortly before Menkaure, though this seems poorly

supported elsewhere in the archaeological or textual records (Reisner 1931, 243-246). So what does this inscription mean, then? It clearly indicates that Hordjedef was revered in social memory, which—for an unknown reason—emphasized his royal lineage. Perhaps his role as the agent in *imsh.w hr* formulae and his semi-royal status was blurred in later memories—later because most scholarship tends to agree that the inscription dates to the Middle Kingdom, perhaps specifically the Twelfth Dynasty (McKeown 2002, 62). There does not seem to be, however, any explicit discussion of why or how the inscription is dated. Although the age of this inscription is uncertain, a later date would explain the possible conflation of Hordjedef’s status.

Although the Wadi Hammamat inscription is difficult to date, Hordjedef’s fame was celebrated at least into the Ramesside Period, as evinced by the inclusion of his name within three lists of great writers: Chester Beatty IV, the Athens Papyrus, and the Harper’s Song of Papyrus Harris 500. The Ramesside Papyrus Chester Beatty IV (British Museum EA 10684), discovered at Deir el Medina, asks, “Is there anyone like Hordjedef? Is there anyone like Imhotep?” (Gardiner 1935). Also likely originally from Deir el-Medina, the Nineteenth or Twentieth Dynasty Papyrus Athens identifies Hordjedef as a literary figure, alongside Imhotep and Djadjaemankh presumably of Papyrus Westcar (Fischer-Elfert 2003, 128-129). A similar sentiment is invoked in the Harper’s Song (pHarris 500, British Museum EA 10060<sup>77</sup>), which is said to have been located in the funerary chapel of King Intef.<sup>78</sup> This Ramesside Period text refers to the “words of Imhotep and Hordjedef, whose teachings are repeated as proverbs” (Fox 1985). The words and teachings being referred to in these texts is likely a reference to the

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<sup>77</sup> Sometimes also referenced as EA 1872,1101.2

<sup>78</sup> It is unclear which King Intef is meant here; many are known from the Eleventh and Seventeenth Dynasties.

“Instructions of Hordjedef,” a didactic text attributed to Hordjedef.

The Instructions of Hordjedef<sup>79</sup> is the earliest preserved example<sup>80</sup> of a corpus now referred to by Egyptologists as “wisdom literature” (Perdue 2008, 17; on genre more generally see Parkinson 2002). These didactic texts are typically written from a father to his son (or an elder scribe to an apprentice) and profess proper behaviors and morals. The Instruction of Hordjedef is known from nine New Kingdom ostraca and one wood tablet dating to the Late Period (Lichtheim 1975, 58). It was published by Helck in 1984, and the most recent studies of the text include Parkinson, though he provides only a brief discussion in *Poetry and Culture*, and Ritter (Helck 1984; Parkinson 1991; Ritter 1999; Parkinson 2002). Though we only have examples from the New Kingdom and later, the text likely originated earlier; Lichtheim suggests the text originally was composed in the Fifth Dynasty, but this is dubious (Lichtheim 1975, 58). Parkinson has more recently suggested an early Middle Kingdom dating following Ritter (Parkinson 2002, 314; Ritter 2009). We cannot trust its internal evidence since it was likely a pseudoepigraphical text (meaning it was set within the historic past and falsely attributed to a writer). Unfortunately, only the beginning of the text is preserved—approximately sixteen lines. The significance for this study lies not in the lines of the text, but in the attribution of the text to Hordjedef.

## ***Conclusions***

Hordjedef’s attribution as an author of an “Instruction,” which was copied at least into the Late Period, indicates that his fame as a sage endured for millennia after his

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<sup>79</sup> For more on the Instruction of Hordjedef see: Brunner-Traut 1940; Brunner 1991, 101-103.

<sup>80</sup> The supposed teaching of Imhotep is not preserved.

death. He was listed among other great writers in the Harper's Song, Payprus Athens, and Papyrus Chester Beatty IV and remembered as a king in the Wadi Hammamat inscription. This epigraphic evidence is telling: it clearly shows that Hordjedef was remembered as a great sage whose status enabled him to be displayed alongside the kings under which he lived. His inclusion in private names at the end of the Old Kingdom and an *imꜣh.w hr* formula also shows that this reverence occurred very quickly after his death. Unfortunately for this study, this evidence is not substantial enough to prove that any apotheosis occurred; there is simply not enough of it. Importantly, though, the evidence in support of his distinction is the very same type of evidence through which we can reconstruct other apotheoses. The evidence indicates that there was great veneration for Hordjedef upon his death, which continued into the Late Period, despite what might have been deliberate destruction of his tomb in the First Intermediate Period. The proliferation of Hordjedef's Instruction text and his inclusion in these lists of writers clearly sets him apart from average dead. His distinction can be explained in two ways: (1) he was deified, but we have lost evidence to time, or (2) Hordjedef was never deified, but he was honored and existed somewhere along a scale of distinction—greater than the average dead, but not quite a god.

## **Chapter 5.2: Ptahhotep**

More famous, perhaps, than Hordjedef's didactic text is the "Instructions of Ptahhotep," which was supposedly originally penned by Old Kingdom official named Ptahhotep, who was memorialized in the New Kingdom as a great sage. The first challenge in the discussing Ptahhotep's distinction, though, is identifying the appropriate

Ptahhotep since there are numerous officials who shared this name and were buried at Saqqara. There are two officials named Ptahhotep who different scholars have suggested could have been the original author of the didactic text, “The Instructions of Ptahhotep,” despite no known Old Kingdom copy (Hagen 2012). Both worked under King Isesi at the end of the Fifth Dynasty and held high titles. Ptahhotep I was buried at mastaba D62 and his grandson, Ptahhotep II, was buried in a dual mastaba, D64, with his father (Ptahhotep I’s son) Akhethotep. Early archaeologists tended to think that Ptahhotep I was the attributed author of the Instruction text, but more recently scholars have suggested Ptahhotep II is the more likely “author” (Paget and Pirie 1896; Davies 1901). Ptahhotep was a common name at the end of the Old Kingdom. Attestations are known from Giza and Saqqara cemeteries, dating mostly to the Fifth and Sixth Dynasties (Baer 1960, 74-75). It is difficult, then, to say with any certainty that there was purposeful re-use of the name Ptahhotep with a single, specific Ptahhotep in mind (though this is arguably possible). Thus, we cannot look to onomastic evidence for his possible deification. There is also no published evidence for a shrine or priesthood, and no evidence for him being referred to explicitly as a god.

It seems as if Ptahhotep’s inclusion in references to deified dead in scholarship (e.g. Wildung 1977, 35; Baines 1987, 87;<sup>81</sup> Franke 1994, 133) is based primarily on two pieces of evidence: (1) his attribution as an author of the likely pseudoepigraphic text, “The Instructions of Ptahhotep,” and subsequent inclusion in lists of sages, and (2) Selim

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<sup>81</sup>Note that Baines switched his footnotes for Ptahhotep and Hordjedef. His footnote for Ptahhotep refers the reader to Junker’s *Giza VII*, Junker in *Studi in memoria di Ippolito Rosellini...*, and Goedicke 1958. All of these references lead to evidence in support of Hordjedef’s deification, without any mention of Ptahhotep. The footnote for Hordjedef (Baer’s *Rank and Title in the Old Kingdom*, pages 74-5), however, will take the reader to information on Ptahhotep (which is addressed in the main text).

Hassan's possibly still unpublished (see below) claim to have found evidence of apotheosis nearby the tomb of Ptahhotep I, similar to that of Kagemni (Baer 1960, 74-75). The discrepancy lies between Baer's 1960 reference and the posthumous publication of Hassan's excavations in three volumes in 1975 (it is unclear whether or not Baer had access to the original, unpublished versions of these reports, or how he otherwise had knowledge of this unpublished claim). Baer lists evidence for a deified Ptahhotep under an entry for Ptahhotep I (of D62). The only evidence in Hassan's reports, however, that could be interpreted as evidence of deification is listed under the material found nearby the tomb of Ptahhotep II (D64). Two stone artifacts, one a broken block, the other an offering table, invoke Ptahhotep in an *im3h.w hr* formula (Hassan 1975, 64 & 70). The block was found in debris of the D64, and therefore Hassan cannot ascribe ownership to it. The block reads only *im3h.w hr Pth-htp*, without any determinative following Ptahhotep (Hassan 1975, 64). Upon the upper portion of the second object, a limestone offering table, is a horizontal inscription which reads: *htp di nswt Inpw prt-hrw nt im3h.w hr Pth-htp* (Hassan 1975, 70). Ptahhotep's name in this instance is followed by a seated *šps* figure and a standing man, *smsw*, determinative. It is unclear whether this is indeed the evidence being referred to by Baer. If not, then the evidence for Ptahhotep I's distinction remains unpublished. If this is what Baer was mentioning, then perhaps he made a mistake and meant to list this data under his entry for Ptahhotep II. In any case, this evidenced distinction, though exclusive and notable, does not conclusively prove that Ptahhotep was conceived as a god in his role as facilitator between realms.

Ptahhotep was further distinguished in other respects. Ptahhotep was included, alongside Hordjedef and Imhotep, in a list of great writers of the past, recorded on

p.Chester Beatty IV (British Museum ESA 10684). As discussed above in the case of Hordjedef, Ptahhotep's attribution as an author of a piece of wisdom literature and his inclusion in a list of great writers clearly show that he was memorialized within ancient Egyptian cultural memory. Although Ptahhotep was clearly distinguished from other dead through this memorialization, it is not enough, however, to speak of his deification without more evidence—the sort that was mentioned but possibly left unpublished by Hassan.

### **Chapter 5.3: Governors of 'Ain Asil in the Dakhla Oasis**

Unlike Hordjedef and Ptahhotep, the governors of 'Ain Asil were not famed for their scholarship, but were venerated for their status as local leaders. Their memories were retained not in literature, but through the endurance of their *ka*-chapels, which became a locus for local religious activity. The settlement of 'Ain Asil was founded in the late Fifth or early Sixth Dynasty near the modern city of Balat. Its associated cemetery is Qila el-Dabba, where the great “governors of the Dakhla Oasis” were buried, who were identified by the title *ḥkꜣ wḥꜣt*. Under Pepi II a palace was built with associated chapels (*ḥwt-kꜣ*) and dependencies—magazines, bakeries, houses of personnel, etc. (Soukiassian 1997, 16). In general *ḥwt-kꜣ* chapels were erected to honor the king, high officials, or members of the royal family (Legros 2010, 159). Although the governors were buried in large mastabas in the necropolis of Qila el-Dabba, they established settlement chapels similar in concept to Heqaib's shrine (also a *ḥwt-kꜣ*) at Elephantine (Kemp 2006, 201; cf Allam 1988, 40). Five chapels, of similar architecture and dimensions, were excavated at the southern edge of the village (Franke 1994 122). Three



mains stages of construction are identifiable in the archaeological and textual records over five generations of governors (Ziermann and Eder 2001). The privilege of building these chapels in the settlement, near the palace, was given to the governors first by Pepi II, as evinced by a royal decree (Soukiassian 1997, 17). A second fragmentary decree was later discovered, suggesting that this practice was, to some degree, dependent upon royal renewal (Pantalacci 1989, 74). Indeed, after a large fire, which can be dated to the early First Intermediate Period, destroyed much of the palace, chapels, and nearby settlement, the chapels were partially rebuilt and the original, but then damaged, royal decree of Pepi II was prominently displayed (Soukiassian 2002, 521-523). The re-installation of the decree by the local community of ‘Ain Asil might have been an act intended to legitimize the building renewal. There is evidence for an extensive building program, which included the upkeep of these chapels and associated dependent structures, through at least the First Intermediate Period and possibly into the Middle Kingdom (Soukiassian 1997, 17; Soukiassian 2002). The significant amount of offering tables, offering vessels, and votives deposited at these chapels demonstrates their unique role within the larger religious landscape of ‘Ain Asil. They were clearly locales of great ritual activity (Soukiassian 2002). This is similar to the evidence we see for Heqaib’s sanctuary at Elephantine. Heqaib, however, is clearly identified as a god through formulaic invocation, references to a priesthood, and his identification as *ntr*, among other things. We can, thus, securely classify his *ḥwt-k3* as a sanctuary dedicated to his divine cult. The chapels of the governors, however, have none of these elements, leaving their functions and the roles of the deceased governors unclear.

Like the other “distinguished” men discussed in this chapter, the governors of

‘Ain Asil clearly possessed an elevated status after death. The prevalence of cultic activity, which extends beyond expected mortuary cult, occurring at and nearby their chapels suggests that their chapels became loci for ritual engagement, similar to what we see at Isi’s tomb at Edfu, or Heqaib’s sanctuary at Elephantine. Finally, the fact that the chapels were reconstructed after a major destruction episode indicates that their local significance, and the significance of the governors’ posthumous cult, persisted through the political turmoil of the state, underscoring the locality of the practice.

Though the cult of the governors was never fully realized, as we see in the cases of Heqaib and Isi, the form of the cult more closely resembles the trends characteristic of apotheosis in the provinces. Thus, I suggest that the mechanisms of distinction abided by similar social determinants that governed the decorum of apotheosis.

#### **Chapter 5.4: Summary**

Hordjedef, Ptahhotep, and the governors of ‘Ain Asil were all celebrated and distinguished as “above” average dead by their local communities, but none were venerated in ways that were restricted to the gods. Hordjedef’s and Ptahhotep’s memorialization in literature, and the continued upkeep of the *hwt-k3*’s of the governors were all indicators that signaled their elevated status. The cases of Hordjedef, Ptahhotep, and the governors of ‘Ain Asil all demonstrate that the phenomenon of apotheosis did not exist outside of other modes through which local dead were distinguished. The overlap in processes of distinction between these distinguished dead and the deified dead of Chapters Three and Four speak to this point. Specifically, Hordjedef’s and Ptahhotep’s inclusion in *im3h.w hr* formulae and the veneration of the governors at *hwt-k3*’s which

were central to religious activity at ‘Ain Asil, are distinguishing indicators that were also shared by the deified dead. Thus, the processes of distinction and deification existed alongside each other, as part of the same spectrum of practice and display.

## **CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS**

### **Chapter 6.1: Contextualizing apotheosis in socio-religious landscapes**

The original motive for this study was to investigate the earliest recorded instances of apotheosis in ancient Egypt in order to better understand its utility within ancient Egyptian society and religion. What became immediately apparent, is that the ancient Egyptian data is much more complex than my question anticipated. I expected there to be sharp distinctions between four groups, in relative order of exclusivity and increasing status: “average” dead, deified dead, the king, and the gods. Instead, what I discovered were grey areas in which these groups partially overlapped, sharing certain characteristics in certain settings, but remaining otherwise distinct. The best way to understand this phenomenon is to conceptualize a dynamic spectrum, for which we unfortunately only have fragmentary evidence. At one end of the spectrum are the gods and at the other we have the “less-than-average dead,” for whom we have problematically paltry evidence in the Old Kingdom, with only sparse evidence dating to the Middle Kingdom (Richards 2005). The “less-than-average dead” were those who presumably died, and were buried simply, without monumental architecture and for whom a mortuary cult was likely limited to meager, ephemeral offerings and vocalized rites. For the period of the Old through Middle Kingdoms, it is difficult to talk about non-elite mortuary culture, which is a problem in itself that would ideally be addressed further in future

scholarship (e.g. Richards 2005; Baines 2010). For this study, however, I am concerned only with elite mortuary culture, since those who underwent apotheosis came exclusively from this group. This chapter, then, will attempt to approximate the spectrum of distinction that ranged from the “average” (elite) dead to the gods.

The agent of the average dead, as established in Chapter Two, was the *akh*. The dead in this form was inherently social, looking outwards to the living. The dead in this role was an intercessor and intermediary. He (and for the most part we are speaking of male dead, but certainly not exclusively) threatened the living in order to protect his tomb; he boasted about his virtues and political connections so that the living would keep his funerary offerings replenished. In return, he used his efficacy (*ikr*-ness) within the divine Hereafter to negotiate with the other dead and the gods on behalf of the living petitioner, and he used his sacred knowledge (*ʿpr*-ness) to litigate and give advice. The *akh* could travel between the earthly and divine realms through the liminality provided by the tomb. The tomb was, thus, likely the primary locus of engagement with the dead, though later evidence suggests that there may have also been domestic shrines, for more mundane or urgent ritual engagement (e.g. Demarée 1983). The *akh*’s role, and that of the average dead more generally, was inherently tied to the living. Although the average dead may have been requested to act on behalf of someone in the divine tribunal, or to stop a vengeful dead who was causing illness on earth, the *akh*’s efficacy was intrinsically linked to his relationship and usefulness to the living in their human, corporeal form. Meaning, the average dead could not help the living transcend their human form upon death. They could not aid the newly deceased in their transfiguration. Although the *akh* had access to spells and knowledge that allowed him to partake in the world of the divine,

his efficacy was limited to earthly matters. For supernatural matters, the living and the dead had to appeal to the king or special, distinguished dead.

The king's pivotal role in mortuary religion in the Old Kingdom is made abundantly clear by archaeological and textual sources; the clustering of tombs near the royal pyramids, the mythology espoused in the Pyramid Texts, and biographies of officials all point to the essential role of the king in the divine Hereafter (Stauder-Porchet 2011; Bárta 2013). The earthly realm was the realm of the King as Horus, exemplified elegantly by Khafre's diorite statue, which shows him in a unifying embrace with the Horus falcon (Cairo Museum JE 10062).<sup>82</sup> The divine Hereafter was the realm of the dead king, who went away "alive" as Osiris. And it was through the king's grace and favor, through his *imꜥh*, that one could share in the ultimate splendor of the Hereafter (Bárta 2013, 259). That is not to say that the dead did not have an afterlife without the king; clearly, the abilities of the *akh* indicate otherwise. But rather it was through this relationship with the king that one could most fully benefit from all of the privileges available in the Hereafter. Arguably, it is because of the king's dual existence—as man and god—and dominion in both realms, that he is able to provide this assistance, along with other funerary gods (e.g. Anubis, Osiris). This assistance, or facilitation, is revealed by the *imꜥh.w hr* formula.

So when we witness certain dead partaking in the role of facilitator, as communicated by their inclusion in *imꜥh.w hr* formulae, we can, and must, distinguish these beings from the average dead. Their inclusion in this relationship, as one who assists the admittance into the Hereafter, is normally exclusive to the king and the gods. Private persons' participation in this schema communicated their semi-divine,

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<sup>82</sup> For images, measurements, etc. see: <http://www.globalegyptianmuseum.org/record.aspx?id=14878>

“distinguished” status. This status is initially locally constructed, though they can eventually break out of their regional milieu, as we see in the cases of the great writers Hordjedef and Ptahhotep. Their remembrance outside of their locale is due to their associations with great pieces of literature. Papyrus Chester Beatty IV conveniently explains this phenomenon: “A man decays, his corpse is dust. All his kin have perished; But a book makes him remembered, through the mouth of its reciter.”<sup>83</sup> The texts attributed to these figures have enabled their memories to endure across time and space, unlike other distinguished or deified dead. The enduring social memory of these beings as distinguished dead could be similarly communicated through the continuation of monumental posthumous cults, such as we see in the case of the governors of ‘Ain Asil. Thus, the role of these distinguished dead was, like the average dead, to help mediate between realms, but they additionally could assist in the transfiguration of the dead and his acceptance into the Hereafter. These distinguished dead sit somewhere along this spectrum of distinction between the average dead and the king/gods.

Alongside and overlapping with the sacred roles of the king and gods are the deified dead. These dead are, in some instances, marked as gods explicitly by hieroglyphic inscriptions—either the inclusion of a divine determinative or their identification as *ntr*. In other instances, evidence for their apotheosis is more indirect: inclusions in theophoric name constructions and offering formulae. Even seemingly obvious evidence, such as the presence of shrines and priests, is complicated by the fact that similar monuments and staff are also dedicated to the upkeep of the mortuary cults of average and distinguished dead. Significantly, the humanity of these beings is never

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<sup>83</sup> Translation following Lichtheim 1976, 177. Column 3: *s šꜥ hꜣr.f m iwtꜥ; hꜣw.f nb ms n tꜣ; in sš r dd shꜣ.tw.f; m r n dd n r*

denied or ignored. In fact quite the opposite seems to have been prevalent. The dead who underwent apotheosis were men who held high titles and were particularly renowned within their communities. They were mortal men whose status and office endowed upon them certain religious privileges and supernatural qualities. Variables such as success in military endeavors, living to an old age, being an effective leader and communicator during life, and being remembered as particularly knowledgeable and prepared, are seen consistently among the dead who were deified.

Like the distinguished dead, cults of deified dead were originally incredibly local (Gunn 1926). Baines similarly suggests that the cults to deified dead were not just local, but limited to local elites specifically (Baines 1987, 88). One of the problems is that we simply do not have much non-elite evidence from this period. Although speculative, as Baines warns, I would argue that, especially with the case of Heqaib (for whom we have the most evidence), the cult would have at least extended into the social awareness of local non-elites. His sanctuary was located adjacent to residential quarters in a high traffic zone, meaning that the sanctuary would have been visible to the inhabitants of Elephantine, to elites and non-elites alike, and part of the landscape of the island (Eaton-Krauss 1988, 13). Additionally, royal building programs at Heqaib's shrine also indicate that his cult was recognized outside of the Aswan region. This has led some scholars to suggest a slightly wider circle of worship (Junker 1947; Goedicke 1955). I agree with both points—for most deified dead (the notable exception being Heqaib), their cults and worship remained relatively localized; however, the preponderance of evidence (e.g. Djedi and Kagemni) and the visibility of some of these cults (e.g. Heqaib and Isi) logically implies that, at the very least, the larger (non-elite) community was aware of



these beings. The inclusion of Ptahhotep and Hordjedef in New Kingdom lists of great writers, and the worship of Imhotep, an Old Kingdom official, in the New Kingdom advocates for the practice of an oral tradition, perhaps folkloric, for which we do not have positive evidence, but which most certainly existed.

What was the point, then, of apotheosis during this period? What services did these beings provide, which would have motivated their supernatural transformations? We see that both distinguished dead and deified dead were often invoked in *imꜣḥ.w ḥr* formulae, which implies that they acted as more than intercessors, but were local guides for their community, particularly in the necropolis. This connection to privilege in the necropolis is furthered by Heqaib's and Wahka's inclusion in the *ḥtp-di-nswt* royal offering formula. Isi's tomb, which was the locus of his cult and housed dedicatory votives to other gods as well, became a local locus for religious expression and access, much like other Middle Kingdom and later temples. Although this activity was also predominantly elite, we really cannot speak very conclusively about non-elite practice in temples in general (for the exceptions see Bussmann 2010). The deified dead discussed in this study can be characterized as local gods, some of who gained fame outside their original locales. Just as Ptah was associated with the city of Memphis, Isi was patron of Edfu, as was Kagemni at Saqqara. The growing regionalism of the late Old Kingdom (*vide infra* §6.2) may have contributed to this rise in apotheosis first witnessed in the Sixth Dynasty; the growing importance of local histories and local temples could have motivated a rise in worship of local figures known from regional folklore in the Middle Kingdom.

## **Chapter 6.2: Historicizing apotheosis**

The evidence for apotheosis in the Old through Middle Kingdoms is admittedly meager, limited to only six known examples. But as previously mentioned, there is no reason to expect a significantly greater dataset. This is confirmed by contemporaneous examples of deified cults in Mesopotamia, which were similarly limited to about the same number of attestations (Brisch 2008). This means, though, that identifying trends is inherently problematic, as new evidence could challenge the conclusions being drawn here. Nevertheless, this chapter will draw out as much as is possible from this limited corpus, while giving myself allowance to change my mind as new data becomes published and available. The extant evidence illustrates that apotheosis was first practiced successfully during the Sixth Dynasty and again near the beginning of the Middle Kingdom (Eleventh or Twelfth Dynasty). The previous section (§6.1) situated this process within its appropriate social and religious spheres. The aim of this section is to contextualize apotheosis historically in order to get at (1) why apotheosis happened, and (2) why it happened when it did. Reconstructing motivations in the ancient world is always a tricky endeavor since they are fundamentally inaccessible. Instead of identifying and describing the motivations for apotheosis, I attempt to carve out and describe the spaces within history in which this process was occurring. I then try to draw logical connections between the displayed socio-religious functions of apotheosis and the historical impetus(es) that may have demanded such functions. By reconstructing the historical narratives of the late Old Kingdom and early Middle Kingdom, two trends related to apotheosis emerge:

- (1) Apotheosis is first recorded in the Sixth Dynasty in the cemeteries near the capital in a rather modest form. Certain other dead are also distinguished during this period from “average” dead, but are not quite deified. Historically, this is a period in which the king’s political and religious centrality within mortuary culture begins to atrophy simultaneous to growing regionalism. Thus, apotheosis in the Old Kingdom seems to be intrinsically tied to the changing role of the king.
- (2) Apotheosis in the provinces (Edfu and Elephantine) is observable during the onset of the Middle Kingdom. The divinity of these beings is fully realized and publically articulated. Historically, this period marks the reunification of Egypt under new Theban kings who implemented a religious program that emphasized the role of the king in the larger divine pantheon through interventions in local temples. Thus, apotheosis in the Middle Kingdom was occurring within a milieu in which local gods and their divine institutions were recognized as being both potential resistance to and instruments of the new political machine.

The first trend I have identified is historically situated near the end of the Old Kingdom. Multiple theories have been put forth to explain the collapse of the Old Kingdom, notably: foreign invasion (Jansen-Winkel 2010), climatic stress (Bárta 2009, 52), an overgrown bureaucracy (Mueller 2014, 4), and a failing economy (Kanawati 1980, 131). These theories, though, need not be mutually exclusive. Indeed, Bárta is correct in proposing that droughts and other climatic issues correlate to the Old Kingdom collapse; although it is likely not the sole cause of the collapse, it certainly would have

accelerated and exacerbated other social, political, and economic problems (Bárta 2009; Hassan 1997). Mueller points out that Jansen-Winkeln's theory of foreign invasion has chronological issues, and is, thus, not the most likely cause (Mueller 2014, 5).

Additionally, citing Römer (2011) and Warden (2014), Mueller draws attention to evidence that undermines the economic theory (Mueller 2014, 5). In response to a theory suggesting an administrative cause, Mueller concludes, "It is possible that the weakness of the central government was more significant than the strength of the provinces" since the "balance of power between the royal residence and the provinces does not seem to have been disturbed" (Mueller 2014, 5). I am not convinced, however, by Mueller's argument that the balance of power remained in equilibrium.

Motives aside, what is certain is that which can be observed at the end of the Old Kingdom in the archaeological and textual records. There was a noticeable decrease in foreign interactions, trade, and expeditions (Mueller 2014, 5). Important for this study, though, was the observable heightening of regionalism, with towns rather than nomes becoming the normative "local" scale (Jansen-Winkeln 2010, 287-290). Offices, also, became increasingly inheritable, making power more and more localized (Mueller 2014, 4). It is worth noting that those who held the title of vizier in the Fourth Dynasty, for example, carried the title "king's son," or "king's son of his body" in all but three instances; in the Fifth and Sixth Dynasties, viziers dropped this title, with one exception (Bárta 2013, 271). The men who held the second highest position in Egypt were choosing to not justify their position through their (real or social) royal lineage. Moreover, during the reign of Pepi II there is specific evidence for changing relations between the Residence and the provinces. For example, during his reign officials with the title

“Overseer of Upper Egypt” are almost exclusively buried outside of the capital, a trend opposite of what is observed prior to Pepi II, which suggests growing regionalism (Mueller 2014, 4). Tomb biographies and decoration (the “Second Style”) also display greater variation and innovation in the Sixth Dynasty. Particularly relevant is the shift in tomb biographies from ones that exclusively extol the tomb owner’s unique relationship to the king, to biographies that expand upon local identities that focus upon the individual’s (albeit formulaic) worth (Stauder-Porchet 2011). Sørensen nuances this shift by acknowledging that “certain ritual limits are respected, but private autobiography and other non-ritual parts of the private tomb program absorb themes of divine access which used to mark the royal socio-religious status” (Sørensen 1989, 114). It is also during the Sixth Dynasty that use of the *imꜣh.w hr* formula to invoke distinguished dead and groups (such as “the people”) begins. This strongly indicates an atrophic shift in the role of the king as sole custodian of mortuary access and religious privilege. Why this degeneration was happening, I am unsure, and I am not confident its motives will ever be truly understood.

Definitively, though, with the collapse of the Old Kingdom at the end of the Sixth Dynasty, the “ritual limits” of the king also disappeared. This is, in part, what other scholars have discussed as “democratization of the afterlife,” and what Egyptian texts have described as a sort of “value crisis” (Sørensen 1989, 114). Specifically, the “Lamentations of Ipuwer” (pLeiden 344) describe this period as a cheapening of sacred knowledge as a result of this greater access: “magic spells are divulged, spells are made worthless through being repeated by people” (Lichtheim 1975, 155). Some scholars, notably Mark Smith (2009a), have pushed back against this “democratization” narrative.

Smith (2009a) and Matthieu (2004) has successfully shown that Old Kingdom non-royal Egyptians had access to similar, if not the same, funerary literature and offering rituals as the king; I, thus, agree that “democratization” is not the right term or concept, though I do not agree entirely with Smith’s interpretation. Smith argues that social access to these spells did not change at the end of the Old Kingdom, but rather, within the social group that could always access these spells, one’s ability to display and afford more permanent forms increased (Smith 2009a). I insist, however, that this is only one part of a complex network of power and access that culminated in one’s admittance into the divine Hereafter. The king’s role in offering formulae, which granted burials, certain funerary monuments, and artifacts, and his ability to prohibit those he had judged from admittance into the afterlife—as evidenced by a decree of Demedjibtawy—should not be undermined (Sethe 1933, 305). Smith largely dismisses these pieces of evidence. He acknowledges that the king had some influence (though he does not describe what this influence might have been), but concludes that it must not have been significant because “had there been any such involvement [of the king in granting the privilege of being glorified], this would hardly have gone unmentioned” (Smith 2009a, 7). I am uncomfortable with using this lack of evidence as evidence that the king was not a proprietor of mortuary privilege when positive evidence exists to support that he was, such as a funerary text of Nimaatre who proclaims his rites of glorification were ordered by the king (Edel 1944, 75; Smith 2009a, 7).

Furthermore, the very presence of monumental social display in Old Kingdom cemeteries indicates that private people did believe that they would have some sort of afterlife, but not necessarily one equal to that of the king (cf. Smith 2009a, 10). It is clear

that there is an expectation of the continuation of a social hierarchy in the Hereafter, with the king at the fore, thus providing him and his fellow kings exclusively with greater privilege. In the Old Kingdom, I do not think we should question whether or not the non-royal dead had access to the afterlife—they clearly did, why else would they bother building tombs or writing letters to non-royal dead—instead the question is how much access the dead could enjoy. The king (the idea of the king, more so than the individual king), who existed at the apex of the social hierarchy alongside the gods, was the sole living benefactor of posthumous privilege and, thus, it was through relationships with the king that one could also partake in the most privileged aspects of the Hereafter.

The king's central role in this network, though, had already begun to change by the Sixth Dynasty and, therefore, I am unconvinced by certain scholars' assertion that the power of the central government, personified by the king, was not weakening during this period *vis-à-vis* the provinces and local elite (e.g. Kanawati 1980; Mueller 2014). Thus, I argue, that during the Sixth Dynasty—and specifically by the reign of Pepi II—the centrality of the king as a mortuary facilitator and benefactor began to abate alongside an observable rise in regionalism. Concurrently, in the Sixth Dynasty we witness an increase in royal interventions at the temples in the provinces, arguably as an attempt to reaffirm royal power within institutions, which, though once under the primary influence of the Residence, had begun to become more autonomous.

The cultural landscape that allowed for the distinction and apotheosis of dead was determined in part, as described above, by the waning centrality of the king in mortuary ritual and display. Additionally, a rise in regionalism correlated to the growth of structures of power located in local temples. Whereas Early Dynastic royal monuments

“give little reason to assume that the kings attached much importance to representing themselves with the gods [as] they are not shown in cultic interaction with them as on the temple walls in later times,” the local temple became increasingly important during the Old Kingdom (Bussmann 2010, xciii). Kings of the Fourth Dynasty onwards established royal domains and provide temple foundations for royal statue cults (Bussmann 2010, xciii). The temples became local economic hubs, around which local elite flocked and integrated themselves. With royal attention directed elsewhere, these regional institutions became increasingly “localized.” The wealth of these local temples was variable, as evidence by the sort of votives being offered (Bussmann 2010, xciii-xciv). By the Sixth Dynasty, it was becoming more and more common for local administrative positions to be inherited rather than assigned by the Residence (Mueller 2014, 4). Concurrently, one of the highest of these administrative positions, that of nomarch, was typically held by the chief priest of the local temple. “This shows,” Bussmann aptly concludes, “that the provincial temples [had] become local elite institutions” (Bussmann 2010, xciv; also Mueller 2014, 4). Similarly, under Pepi I and II, the erection of royal *ka*-chapels near local temples became common (Franke 1994, 122). These chapels, Franke asserts, developed into localized, regional centers that were directly attached to the Residence in association, but which in actuality diverted wealth and power away from the Residence (Franke 1994, 122). By the Sixth Dynasty, the trend of building *ka*-chapels (*hwt-kꜣ*), separate from the tomb, in the city extended to the provincial officials (e.g. Heqaib and the governors of ‘Ain Asil). Additionally, kings of this period intervened in local temples by furnishing them with stone architecture, such as lintels and columns (Bussmann 2010, xciii). While this on one hand could be understood as evidence for growing royal



authority within local temple contexts, I, instead, see this as an almost desperate attempt to sink the royal claws of authority into local institutions, which were for all intents and purposes autonomous by this point.

To summarize, royal power during the first half of the Old Kingdom was structurally focused on the king's unique divine mortuary role. As he was Egypt's patriarch in life, so he was in death. It was only through his grace and the favor of the gods that the privileges of the afterlife were fully realizable to "average/elite" ancient Egyptians. The king was central to social and religious life in this realm and in the divine Hereafter. In the Fourth Dynasty kings began to increase royal temple domains throughout the land of Egypt. By the Fifth or Sixth Dynasty, these temples and *ka*-chapels (*ḥwt-kꜣ*) had grown into local economic hubs in which local power (e.g. the nomarch) was ultimately located. Inherited administrative positions compounded this growing sense of regionalism. By the reign of Pepi II, the king's socio-religious centrality had begun to wane. He turned his attention to the provinces in an attempt to hold onto power by furnishing local temples with royal architecture. Contemporaneously, perhaps as an attempt to fill the power vacuum being left by the king, a (very relative) explosion of dead receiving previously exclusive mortuary privileges is observed near the capital. These dead, whose cults lied literally in the shadow of the king's power as embodied by his pyramid, took on roles otherwise reserved for the kings and the gods. Some dead (e.g. Ptahhotep, Hordjedef, and the governors of 'Ain Asil) were only "distinguished," in that they could now facilitate in the admittance of other deceased into the divine Hereafter, as communicated by their inclusion in *imꜣḥ.w ḥr* formulae. It was through their favor and grace, in addition to the grace of the king and the gods which was never denied, that the

dead could attain the privileges of a fully realized afterlife. Some dead—Djedi, Mehu, and Kagemni—underwent apotheosis and became local gods of local importance. Their names were invoked as part of theophoric names possessed by regional elite, and at least one of them, Djedi, had priests dedicated to the upkeep of his posthumous, divine cult. Because these royal power structures were so engrained in the cemeteries near the capital, when the king's centrality began to falter, even slightly, there was a sense of immediacy among the local elite to fill this vacuum. Thus distinction and deification occurred rapidly after death. Apotheosis, however, was also limited by these power structures. Djedi, Mehu, and Kagemni were deified only so that they could fulfill some sort of community need, which seemed to have centered on achieving a full afterlife.

In the provinces, however, the story is a little different. The king's shadow did not reach the outer provinces to the same degree as is observed near the capital. Thus, apotheosis in the provinces is more dramatic and less constrained by restrictive royal decorum. Whereas power in the Residence emanated from the king and, specifically, his mortuary and political roles, in the provinces, local power structures were connected to the nomarchs and their temples. Thus, in the provinces deified dead took on roles less like that of the king, and more like that of traditional local gods. They were fully articulated as gods in texts, their cults were more fully formed than those near the capital, the locus of their cults took on the forms and roles of local temples, and, at least as is the case with Heqaib, he became an actor in local festival. It is not entirely clear when the cult of Heqaib was fully formed. Some version of his cult could have occurred as early as the Sixth Dynasty, but it started to take on more enduring forms by the time of Intef III, more or less contemporaneous with the cult of Isi—that is, right before Egypt was unified

under the rule of the Theban kings. The origins of Isi's, Heqaib's, and Wahka's cults are shrouded by circumstantial evidence, but it is notable that monumental evidence exists for both Heqaib and Isi that definitively dates to the reign of Senwosret I. By the time of Senwosret I, temples across Egypt, including those dedicated to local gods, had developed into what Kemp has identified as the "formal" temple (Kemp 2006). This practice continued through the Middle Kingdom, as is evidenced by Wahka.

Both Heqaib and Isi were Sixth Dynasty officials who were not deified until, likely, the Eleventh Dynasty at the earliest; that is approximately 100 years after their deaths. I have no answer that is not tainted by conjecture to explain why apotheosis in Edfu and Elephantine took so long to become fully articulated, but I will muse here on some possibilities that seem reasonable. First, it is very possible that Heqaib and Isi were deified earlier than evidence provides a date. They were certainly, at least, distinguished upon death. Perhaps because the structures of power in the provinces were already intertwined with local temples and local rulers, when the Old Kingdom political machine collapsed there was no sense of immediacy; there was no power vacuum to fill by distinguished or deified dead, since living local elite were already filling these positions. This explains why Heqaib and Isi might not have been deified upon their death in the Sixth Dynasty, but why, then, did they undergo apotheosis at the onset of the Middle Kingdom?

I hypothesize that the re-centralization of authority under a single king, and the new administration's attempt to unify, codify, and normalize power across Egypt, could have motivated local elite to hold on tighter to local traditions and histories. It was not coincidence that much of our evidence for the deification of Heqaib comes initially from

his descendants and an impetus for this action is clear. By establishing a local cult to someone like Heqaib, a great warrior and administrator of the last period of Egyptian empire, local elites could justify and legitimize their own power. Heqaib's local history might not have been enough in the face of the growing royal power in Thebes. Through his apotheosis, though, Heqaib became immutable and more powerful than the new kings. Similarly, Isi was one of the first recorded officials to receive the title of vizier. His significant role in earlier administration made him a productive anchor to which to tie local power. Alternatively, it is possible that Heqaib and Isi were deified in the First Intermediate Period, but we have lost all but the traces of this early cult (e.g. Heqaib's cult hall). Then, as kings of the early Middle Kingdom were solidifying their power, they appropriated the cults to these local rulers through commissioned votives and monumental architecture. And this is why, for the case of Heqaib at least, our earliest definitive evidence of his cult is associated with royal building programs that date to the late First Intermediate Period and early Twelfth Dynasty.

Although a slightly different situation is happening in the case of Wahka at Qau el-Kebir, fundamentally the same process is taking place. Local elites at Edfu and Elephantine associated themselves with cults of local deified dead, after which kings of the Middle Kingdom intervened within the established systems of power built into local temple structures in order to reclaim local influence. Similar was the exploitation of local power in the region near Qau el-Kebir. Wegner articulates a convincing case to this effect, asserting that through "the establishment of the mortuary foundation of Senwosret III at South Abydos, the kingship and royal administration may have capitalized on

existing relationships with the provincial power structures at Qaw el-Kebir” (Wegner 2010, 443).

The Theban kings, as local nomarchs themselves, of the late First Intermediate Period and Middle Kingdom displayed a great connectivity to their local temples. They were described as beloved of their local gods who were identified as their fathers and mothers (Bussmann 2010, xciv). Where the kings of the Sixth Dynasty failed, however, they succeeded. Instead of furnishing local temples with votives to the gods, royal temple building campaigns of the Middle Kingdom emphasized the kings and their divine status in the Egyptian pantheon, thus transforming divine spaces into royal-divine spaces (Bussmann 2010, xciv). As the deified dead of the Old Kingdom fit into already proscribed structures of power, so did those who were deified in the Middle Kingdom. This time, however, the structure of power was not the mortuary cult, but the local temple. Because of this, Heqaib’s, Isi’s and Wahka’s divinity was more articulated. All three beings, for example, were invoked as part of numerous *ḥtp-di-nswt* formulae, a position (unlike invocation in *imꜣḥ.w ḥr* formulae) that was only ever afforded to gods.

Apotheosis occurred in the Old and Middle Kingdoms at times in which power structures were shifting, adapting, and reforming—the end of the Old Kingdom and the beginning of the Middle Kingdom. These political, cultural, and religious shifts created power vacuums and opportunities for local communities to display their ancestry, legitimize local power, and develop alternative means of accessing the divine Hereafter. By the mid-Middle Kingdom, apotheosis became more visible in the religious landscape, as evinced by Wahka. Eventually, Djefai-Hapi tried to organize his cult before death. It makes sense, then, that apotheosis became more and more visible, and as a result more

and more popular in the New Kingdom. Though the origins of apotheosis are shrouded by political and religious struggles for power, we must not lose sight of the humanity in the process. Individuals within communities were seeking out posthumous privilege, divine access, and assurance of eternal life. Though apotheosis may have been constructed and manipulated for socio-political gains by a few, for the many these local gods became powerful anchors that connected local communities to the divine realm. Their memories were embedded within the cultural fabric that made up these local communities. Whether for a single generation or for a dozen, upon their death these mere mortal men were displayed, worshiped, and called upon as gods. At moments in which the state was undergoing fundamental changes, the men of these local communities turned inward, towards their own ancestors and leaders to find security and promise in this life and in the eternal Hereafter.

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