

DISSERTATION PROPOSAL

Passports to Eternity Formulaic Demotic Funerary Texts and the Final Phase of Egyptian Funerary Literature in Roman Egypt

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I. Introduction

Funerary texts¹ form the oldest corpus of religious literature² from ancient Egypt, originating with the Pyramid Texts placed in the tombs of fifth dynasty kings. Private individuals appropriated such royal prerogatives, most famously in their use of the Coffin Texts³ and Book of the Dead,⁴ the chronological successors of the Pyramid Texts.⁵ These three corpora of texts

¹ In the past 25 years, Egyptologists have made various attempts to define the terms funerary and mortuary. Assmann considers texts used by priests for recitation during the funerary rituals to be mortuary texts while those texts which were actually buried with the deceased to be funerary [Assmann (1999)]. This dichotomy has since been followed in varying degrees by Smith [cf. the development in definition offered by Smith (1979), 2 and his later comments (1993), 6], Depauw, and Coenen. However, as many of these scholars have noted, mortuary texts are found buried with the deceased and we know that funerary texts were often read before being placed in the grave. Therefore, such a distinction is somewhat misleading [terminology and problems therewith noted by Depauw (1997), 116]. As all of the texts dealt with in this study are presumed to be associated with the burial, whether proven through archaeology or not, I shall use the designation funerary texts to refer to them as well as all other texts which were meant to enable the deceased in the afterlife, regardless of their other uses prior to burial. Among English speaking Egyptologists, the terms funerary and mortuary are often used as mere synonyms (cf. the entries for funerary and mortuary in the *OED*). Interestingly enough, Baines reverses the distinction of Assmann, stating: "I term texts 'mortuary' in the general sense that they could serve the deceased in the next life. 'Funerary' texts and other materials are a subcategory of mortuary ones that relates to the primarily ritual process leading from death to the burial of the mummy" [Baines (2004), 15, n. 2]. In this same note, Baines mentions the tenuousness of his categories: "It is not possible to distinguish neatly between the mortuary and the funerary, and the relevance of both types should be borne in mind."

² Here I understand "literature" as broadly conceived. The problem of defining and understanding "literature" has received enormous scholarly attention recently in the Egyptological community. See especially, Loprieno (1991); *idem.* (1996); *idem.* (1996b); Moers (1999); Parkinson (2002); Baines (2003).

³ The Coffin Texts are a body of spells, but other mortuary compositions such as the Book of the Two Ways supplement them. For the Coffin Texts, the definitive edition remains De Buck (1935-1961), completed by Allen (2006). For the Book of the Two Ways, the three editions by Lesko (1972), Piankoff (1974), and Hermsen (1991) compliment each other.

⁴ The works of Lepsius (1842) and Naville (1886) are still important to the study of the Book of the Dead, but see the recent bibliography of Gulden and Munro (1998).

have received enormous scholarly attention and a place in the public's imagination. However, far less familiar is the funerary literature which succeeds these compositions, the final documents in this tradition being virtually disregarded as unimportant apart from philological interest.⁶

The Coffin Texts and Book of the Dead traditions led to further developments in New Kingdom religious practice. New funerary texts known as the Underworld Books⁷ appeared alongside Book of the Dead spells in royal tombs, while Book of the Dead papyri dominated private elite funerary literature. The *Amduat* papyri⁸ of the Third Intermediate Period built on both Book of the Dead and Underworld Book themes, but expressed them through elaborate images rather than elaborate texts, a common practice in other spheres of Egyptian religious expression.⁹ The Book of the Dead was further codified under the 26th dynasty which resulted in the order of spells known as the "Saite recension" and this tradition was maintained into the

⁵ The fundamental work on the pyramid texts remains Sethe (1908-1922); *idem.* (1935-1962). It should be noted that the so-called "democratization" of funerary literature, i.e. the imitation in the private sphere of practices formerly reserved for royalty, had also taken place with the Pyramid Texts, for which see Hayes (1937).

⁶ The study of these texts consists primarily of text editions, often with philological commentary, e.g. Brugsch (1855); Spiegelberg (1902); *Idem.* (1906-1908); Reich (1931); Botti (1941), 32-35, pl. 6; Müller (1976); Brunsch (1984); Chauveau (1990); Vittmann (1990); Hughes (2005), 8-9, pl. 12. Reich (1931, 86) notes the importance of these documents, but nevertheless his study is focused primarily on the philological aspects of the text. Notable exceptions include the studies of Quaegebeur (1990), Depauw (2003) and Stadler (2004). Quaegebeur made the first real attempt at understanding the purpose of these documents. Depauw speculated on how these texts may have actually been incorporated into the burial. Stadler provided a score transliteration of many parallel texts and a short discussion of some of the anomalous examples. However, his limited study necessarily curtailed his remarks. Note also the complete absence of formulaic Demotic funerary texts, which probably post-date many of the textual examples cited, in the following citation: "In the late Ptolemaic and early Roman Periods the *Book of the Dead* came to be replaced by a new, shorter composition, conceived as a passport to life after death, with the title 'document for breathing'; one of the finest examples is that of Kerasher, with text interspersed with colour vignettes such as the Judgement of the Dead. Abridged versions of the *Book of Breathing* could be written like letters on a single sheet to be folded and set under the chin or at the feet of the deceased. Similar short funerary texts of the early Roman Period include the *Book of Living Throughout Eternity*, and all these texts together form the last creative output of the Egyptian funerary tradition before it was replaced first by late Greek and then by Christian customs in which funerary texts no longer accompanied the body to the afterlife" [Quirke and Spencer (1992), 101-102].

⁷ Hornung (1989).

⁸ Published with a detailed study of the mythological aspects of the imagery in Piankoff (1957).

⁹ Imagistic expression is a fundamental aspect of the Egyptian language itself. See Goldwasser (1995); Assmann (2005), 393.

Ptolemaic Period.¹⁰ The Book of the Dead based upon a “canonical” model of traceable spells is replaced in the Ptolemaic Period¹¹ by the Documents for Breathing¹² and other miscellaneous compositions such as the Book of Transversing Eternity¹³ and glorification (*s3h.w*) spells.¹⁴

In the Ptolemaic Period, select Book of the Dead spells began to appear on small sheets of papyrus, acting both as funerary text and phylactery.¹⁵ By the very end of the Ptolemaic Period, our first funerary text written in the Demotic script appears.¹⁶ The remaining Demotic funerary texts date to the Roman Period. Demotic funerary texts, as all funerary literature of ancient Egypt, are a variable group consisting of texts from very long and detailed to the single

¹⁰ Barguet (1967), 12-13.

¹¹ Through genealogical studies, Quaegebeur (1997) was able to show that many Book of the Dead papyri, once thought to date to the Roman Period, were actually composed in the Ptolemaic Period. Scholars have since found it difficult to securely date Book of the Dead papyri based on the “classical” model to the Roman Period [Quirke (1993); Coenen (2001)]. Therefore, it would seem that the replacement of Book of the Dead papyri with other funerary compositions (e.g. Books of Breathing) was nearly complete by the end of the Ptolemaic Period. This has obvious implications for the development of religious practices.

¹² Basic translations and descriptions are included in Goyon (1972). Coenen (1995, 1998, 2001, 2003, 2004) has gone far in publishing and categorizing the texts. The forthcoming catalogue of Herbin (2007) will aid tremendously in the interpretation of these texts and significantly increase the number of published texts. See also Ritner (2003) and Curtis, Kockelmann and Munro (2005).

¹³ As Stadler points out, the “typical Theban mortuary literature of the Graeco-Roman period was the genre of the Books of Breathing, comprising a range of different types of texts and increasingly replacing the use of the Book of the Dead” [Stadler (2000), 114].

¹⁴ See Szczudlowska (1970); Herbin (2004); Barbash (2006). For a general overview, see the still valuable discussions in Goyon (1972) and *idem.* (1974).

¹⁵ Such practices were anticipated by BD spells appearing on other funerary items such as the BD 30 on heart scarabs and BD 151 on magical bricks. Funerary texts were often attached to the mummy as protective phylacteries [Illés (2006); Illés (2006b)]. Hieroglyphic and Hieratic precursors to formulaic Demotic funerary texts are numerous and offer insight into the development of this custom. Hieratic phylacteries are known from several Ptolemaic papyri. The texts generally consist of Book of the Dead passages such as selections from BD 89 in P Basel III 131 and BD 100 in P Louvre 3233 [P Louvre 3233: Goyon (1977), 45-54; P Basel (III 131): Hauser-Säublin (1976), 11; see commentary and complete list in Illés (2006), esp. 129-130]. BD spells in Demotic are attested on several papyri, most notably P Bibliothèque Nationale 149 published by Lexa (1910) and re-edited by Stadler (2003). Mark Smith has recently discovered a Demotic example of BD spell 171 on P. Strasbourg 3 verso [Smith (2005a)].

¹⁶ Dating to 56 BCE, the earliest dated Demotic funerary text is P Louvre E 3452, the Demotic version of the transformation spells published by Legrain (1889) and re-examined in the unpublished dissertation of Smith (1979). While in the Demotic script, the language of Louvre E 3452 displays many archaic features retained from earlier phases of the Egyptian language.

phrase. The contents of the most elaborate examples are varied and unique, paralleled by the variability of the hieratic manuscripts from the Roman Period.¹⁷ From the first through the third century, there is a flourishing of Demotic funerary texts, the most common of which are not the beautifully decorated and detailed papyri reminiscent of classical Books of the Dead, but brief formulaic funerary wishes embodying the basic essentials of Egyptian afterlife theology, parallels for which can be found in the Books of Breathing and funerary phylacteries.¹⁸ These formulaic texts display an established tradition in their repeated phraseology and in several cases, interesting vignettes accompany the Demotic texts. More importantly, the formulaic Demotic funerary texts represent the last phase of native Egyptian funerary religion as expressed in their native tongue.¹⁹

II. Previous Scholarship and Statement of Problem

Formulaic Demotic funerary texts have been known to scholars since 1855 when Brugsch included a facsimile of a Dresden papyrus in his Demotic grammar.²⁰ Descriptions of similar

¹⁷ Cf. P BM 10507 [Smith (1987)], P Harkness [Smith (2005)], P Bib Nat 149 [Stadler (2003)], P Rhind I-II [Möller (1913)] with e.g. Papyrus Hynes (OIM 25889) in the forthcoming publication of Dr. Robert K. Ritner. There is a funerary composition in P BM 10507 which is paralleled in P Harkness, but the accompanying funerary compositions are unique to each. Certain compositions such as the Book of Transversing Eternity, studied by Herbin (1994), appear in multiple versions, but these versions are preserved among collections of varying funerary compositions. The same may be said of glorification (*s3h.w*) spells [Szczudlowska (1970); Herbin (2004); Barbash (2006)]. Comparison should also be made with the Documents for Breathing and especially to their shortened versions [Curtis, Kockelmann and Munro (2005), 54].

¹⁸ Reich (1931), 86; Goyon (1972); *idem.*, (1974).

¹⁹ With the assumed caveats about dating, cf. the comments of Riggs [Riggs (2003), 194], “The texts of the papyri are the latest securely dated funerary compositions from Egypt and are in keeping with other funerary literature of the Roman Period.” It should, however, be noted that features of Egyptian funerary religion were preserved *mutatis mutandis* in Hellenistic and Coptic traditions, as well as beyond. Such are the foundations for the sentiment of Peacock, “There can be no aspect of Roman Egypt more complex or more difficult to understand than religion” [Peacock (2000), 437].

²⁰ Brugsch (1855), pl. 10.

papyri from the Louvre museum were published in the catalogue of Deveria in 1874.²¹ Several further examples were published by Spiegelberg (under the label “Liturgischer Text”) in his catalogues of Demotic papyri in the Berlin²² and Cairo²³ museums. The scattered publications on Demotic funerary texts were brought together in a survey made by Mark Smith in his 1979 dissertation, which provided the inspiration for this dissertation as well as the designation “formulaic” text.²⁴ Since Smith’s survey, a handful of further articles have appeared. Many are no more than philological text editions and few have discussed the implications or importance of these religious compositions. Several exceptions are the recent studies of Quaegebeur, Depauw and Stadler, which have made important strides in our understanding of Demotic funerary documents.²⁵

Scholars have often described the formulaic Demotic funerary texts as “abbreviated,” under the assumption that their contents were abridged versions of longer funerary compositions.²⁶ However, it can be shown that even though the formulaic Demotic funerary texts

²¹ Deveria (1874), 143 (Louvre N 2420c), 139 (Louvre N 3165), 138 (Louvre N 3176q), 138 (Louvre N 3176r), 155 (Louvre N 3258), 139 (Louvre N 3375). Deveria published only descriptions and these texts, including Louvre E 10304, were examined by the author during a research visit to the Louvre in November 2006 made possible through the generosity of a François Furet Travel Grant.

²² Berlin 1522, Spiegelberg (1902), pl. 84; Berlin 3169, Spiegelberg (1902), pl. 86.

²³ Cairo 30957, Spiegelberg (1906), 197; Cairo 31170, Spiegelberg (1906), 280-281 and pl. 112; Cairo 31171, Spiegelberg (1906), 281; Cairo 31172, Spiegelberg (1906), 282 and pl. 112; Cairo 31175, Spiegelberg (1906), 284-285 and pl. 114; Cairo 31176, Spiegelberg (1906), 285.

²⁴ “Demotic mortuary texts can be divided into two general categories: (a) short formulaic texts which average approximately ten lines in length...” [Smith (1979), 3-4]. Smith included only a simple list of these texts, as the main subject of his dissertation was P Louvre E 3452.

²⁵ Quaegebeur (1990); Depauw (2003); Stadler (2004).

²⁶ See the title of Reich’s article “An Abbreviated Demotic Book of the Dead,” in which he states: “On the other hand, our papyrus was intended solely to enable the deceased to achieve, by its spell, the fulfillment of his wishes or desires for certain necessities or conveniences in the after-life. What those desires and ideals for the deceased were can be seen more clearly in our papyrus than in the larger Books of the Dead, for the poverty of the party which caused the abbreviation of the usually very elaborate text of the various kinds of the Book of the Dead forced the writer of our small papyrus leaf to condense or to select those wishes which were most desirable for the departed

summarize the major themes of non-formulaic examples, they were not considered abridgements which lacked elements to complete them. This is proven through the repeated imitation of established formulae over a period of at least two centuries. No one has yet attempted a comprehensive study of these texts, and they have never been placed in their proper context within Egyptian funerary culture of the Roman Period.²⁷

In his 1979 survey, Smith identified 47 Demotic funerary texts, 34 of which are formulaic. Additional examples of formulaic Demotic funerary texts since identified can bring this number to 49, increasing the corpus by 44%. These 49 formulaic Demotic funerary texts (33 papyri, 8 on coffins, 4 on sarcophagi, 3 on linen, 1 graffito) will form the core of my dissertation. On the one hand, I want to answer basic questions about their existence: What is the content of their formulae and how does it vary? Why were they produced? Who employed these texts? What religious topics do they express? What is their relationship to other Egyptian funerary literature? How did they develop? What is the meaning of their vignettes? In what ways do their vignettes relate to their texts? On the other hand, I want to use this corpus of texts to help answer questions about religious practices in Roman Egypt: What are the important funerary/religious concepts at the end of the native religious tradition? In what ways are these religious concepts expressed? How are these texts related to the other elements of the funerary assemblage? Do the

with respect to their supposed importance for the life to come. And this is precisely what makes this small text more important than some of the larger ones of its kind” [Reich (1931), 86]. Similar sentiments are found in the description of Depauw: “Both [Cairo 31172 and Sydney Nicholson 346b] are abbreviated examples of what is often called a *šꜥ.t n snsn* ‘document of breathing...’” [Depauw (2003), 97]. It should be noted here that P Louvre 3176Q, P Munich 834a and P Munich 834b all contain the title *šꜥ.t n snsn* “document for breathing” on their versos. As Coenen notes, classification is difficult: “There also exist countless abbreviated versions, but their classification is still somewhat problematic and requires further research” [Coenen (2000), 86-87].

²⁷ In the comments of Reich: “Although the two groups [mummy labels and formulaic papyri] overlap in some respects I think we should make a distinction between them as far as possible. No comprehensive study has yet been made of these matters” [Reich (1931), 86]. It should be noted that Reich further recognized the similarity of other material: “To which several more of the same kind should be added; for example, some inscriptions in tombs, upon stelae, on sarcophagi, and the like” [*ibid.*, 86, n. 3].

formulae of these texts reflect a set of commonly held beliefs or the philosophy of a priestly elite? My methodology will focus on analytical and comparative methods, examining the texts with regard to content as well as context. Comparison with the corpus of non-formulaic Demotic funerary texts will be instrumental in helping to ascertain function, meaning and use.

Additionally, I am interested in establishing the possible ritual context during which the formulaic Demotic funerary texts were employed. As an aid to understanding the meaning and function of this ritual use, it will be helpful to look to the large volume of anthropological literature on ritual. In attempting to understand these texts, I disagree completely with the assessment of Reich who felt that comparing the texts from other elements of the funerary assemblage does “not aid us much in interpreting the abbreviated demotic Book of the Dead ...”²⁸ In fact, I will argue that comparison with the full funerary assemblage is critical for the correct interpretation of such material.

As the name indicates, the contents of the "formulaic Demotic funerary texts" consist of a series of formulaic phrases phrased in the third person.²⁹ We find them written on virtually any available surface, including papyri, coffins, sarcophagi, linen shrouds, and walls.³⁰ While their

²⁸ Reich (1931), 87. To avoid further confusion and inaccuracy, I will avoid Reich's “demotic Book of the Dead” terminology.

²⁹ The use of the third person suggests, on the one hand, a possible liturgical use, perhaps during the funeral to which the formulaic texts on stelae should be compared. On the other hand, it supports the views of Quaegebeur (1990). In his view, the third person was used because the original author is Thoth, who is writing to Osiris on behalf of the deceased. Thus, the deceased is essentially presenting to Osiris a divine recommendation from Thoth. Baines has made insightful comments about use of the third person in the Pyramid Texts: “Since the third person formulation is descriptive and does not address the king as executant or give a role to whoever might recite the texts as spells, it partly fictionalizes their form on the pyramid walls, which neither directly reproduces archetypes nor straightforwardly creates a version for use in the next world. This redactional practice, which is much less pervasive in the Coffin Texts than in the Pyramid Texts, makes the inscribed form highly specialized and, together with the selective character of inscription, almost like a sample: actions of the king, who is the topic, are described, but not from his perspective or comprehensively” [Baines (2004), 16].

³⁰ For the latter, cf. phrases in the Demotic graffiti published in Robert K. Ritner, "Graffiti and Ostraca in the Tomb of Nespakashuty," In E. Pischikova (ed.) *The Tomb of Nespakashuty* (New York: Metropolitan museum, forthcoming).

contents are remarkably uniform, variations exist in grammar, orthography and content (e.g. the identification of the deceased). The formulae and themes of these documents are well exemplified by the text of Papyrus Louvre N 3258:³¹

1	<i>ʿnh p3y=s by r nhḥ rp=f d.t</i>	1	May her soul live forever. May it rejuvenate for eternity,
2	<i>T3-šr.t-p3-ti-ḥnsw r-ms Ns-wr.t mtw p3y=s</i>	2	<i>T3-šr.t-p3-ti-ḥnsw</i> , whom <i>Ns-wr.t</i> bore, and may her
3	<i>by šms r Wsir mtw=s ḥpr ḥn</i>	3	soul serve Osiris, and may she be among
4	<i>n3 ḥsy.w n Wsir mtw=s ḥsy</i>	4	the praised ones of Osiris, and may she favor
5	<i>n3 iir qs=s m-b3ḥ Wsir šc d.t</i>	5	those who made her funerary preparations before Osiris for eternity.
6	<i>rnp.t n ʿnh r-ir=s ḥr p3 t3 35</i>	6	Years of life which she passed on earth – 35.
7	<i>rp=f^rsp-sn¹ d.t rp p3y=s by šc d.t</i>	7	May it rejuvenate, may it rejuvenate for eternity. May her soul rejuvenate for eternity.

The formulae express a focus on the Osirian cult, the rites of which flourished contemporaneously in the second to fourth centuries CE.³² A basic set of fundamental religious beliefs are expressed including the reception of offerings, focus on the *b3* or “soul,” immortality of the soul, post-mortem rejuvenation, and union with Osiris. Most important was the continued survival of the deceased’s *b3*, which became a dominant afterlife concept along with the name (*rn*),³³ continually taking the place of earlier elements such as the *k3*.³⁴ Along with these funerary

³¹ Chaveau published a translation of this text in note 17 of Aubert and Nachtergaele (2005), 298, but it is otherwise unpublished.

³² Riggs (2003); *Idem.*, (2006).

³³ The name (*rn*) was the most common element of identity expressed in the funerary formula *p3 rn nfr mn* “May the good name (of so-and-so) remain.” This formula is found on objects and monuments throughout Egypt. However, the *ʿnh p3 by* formula may have a more restricted regional distribution for it is found mainly at southern sites such as Akhmim, Coptos, Dendera and especially Thebes. For its appearance in the tomb of Nespekashuty, see the forthcoming study of Robert K. Ritner concerning the graffiti in this tomb.

³⁴ Mention of the *k3* never disappeared. However, in the funerary vocabulary of Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt, the *k3* appears more frequently in texts of a higher register, i.e. written in hieratic or hieroglyphs, while the *b3* or *rn*

wishes for the benefit of the deceased, there is also the wish that the deceased be favorable to those who provided for the funerary arrangements. These expressions were the summation, a "Cliff Notes" version if you will, of ancient Egyptian religious theology in the first few centuries CE, codifying what were some of the most widely used religious ideas in Roman Egypt.

Stadler has categorized the formulaic Demotic funerary texts into two groups based on their formulae: A) texts which follow the $\epsilon nh p3 by$ formulae and B) all others. Two unpublished papyri in the Louvre, unknown to Stadler, follow yet another set of formulae. Rather than try to categorize such texts into groups A, B and C, for the purpose of this dissertation, I will use the following terminology. Formulaic Demotic funerary texts consist of any texts employing a pattern of phraseology and evidenced by at least two examples.³⁵ Non-formulaic Demotic funerary texts will then consist of all other Demotic funerary texts for which only a single, unique example exists. By far the most numerous Demotic funerary texts are those which consist of only a single phrase, the most common being the $\epsilon nh p3 by$ and $p3 rn nfr mn$ formulae. These formulae are ubiquitous in the funerary material from the late Ptolemaic and early Roman periods. For example, the phrase which commonly begins the formulaic Demotic funerary texts, $\epsilon nh p3y=f by$ ("May his soul live"), is represented nearly everywhere. The copious amount of material attests to the importance and ubiquity of these ideas in the funerary theology of the time.³⁶ Therefore, it will be important to look at this material as well as its context in order to determine how it relates to the similar phraseology of the formulaic Demotic funerary texts.

appear most often in the Demotic texts. The shadow ($\$wt$) is seldom mentioned, but can be found depicted in contemporaneous scenes.

³⁵ Here I include all formulaic Demotic funerary texts, even the short phrases appearing on mummy labels and in graffiti. However, because of the laconic nature and ubiquity, they will not form part of the corpus of 49 formulaic Demotic funerary texts at the core of this dissertation. The will, however, be used for comparative purposes, their geographical and funerary context being especially important.

³⁶ Other sections of these formulae appear as well, but far less common than $\epsilon nh p3 by$.

Among the formulaic Demotic funerary texts, papyri form a large and important group (33 out of 49 examples). The manner in which these papyri were employed has been the subject of some discussion. Recently, the terms “passport” and “amulet” have become popular designations of formulaic Demotic funerary papyri by analogy with the formally labeled *š^c.t n snsn*.³⁷ Quagebeur is often cited for his idea that these papyri were amuletic letters to Osiris written for the benefit of the deceased by the god Thoth.³⁸ While his discussion is insightful, Quagebeur made no attempt to discuss their placement in the grave. Because nearly all of the papyri have been acquired through illicit excavations, there are virtually no museum records concerning their find spots. This forces scholars to reconstruct theoretically their context through secondary means. Up until now, Depauw, following Reich, has had the most success.³⁹ He identified two papyri written for the same person. By comparison with the instructions accompanying hieratic Books of Breathing, which intend for the papyri to be placed under the head and feet, Depauw then surmised that the formulaic Demotic funerary papyri were also placed under the head and feet of the deceased.⁴⁰ Based on the verso of P Louvre E 10304, Depauw’s theory can now be confirmed. A head drawn on the verso of this papyrus⁴¹ next to the

³⁷ Smith (1993), 14; Caminos (1993); Ritner (2003), 166-167. Depauw suggests that these papyri should be compared with an amulet (despite the heading *š^c.t!*), thus his term “amuletic passport” [Depauw (2003)]. It was presumably the formulaic Demotic texts referred by Hornung, when he states “All copies of both books [First and Second Document for Breathing] known to date are written in hieratic; only a few abbreviated versions are in the Demotic script” [Hornung (1999), 24].

³⁸ Quagebeur (1990). Thoth appears as the quintessential author by virtue of his mastery, indeed invention, of writing and the motif is a common strand among a variety of Egyptian funerary literature. As author, Thoth appears prominently in the Documents for Breathing and P Rhind I-II.

³⁹ Reich (1931), 85; Depauw (2003), 97-98.

⁴⁰ Cf. P Turin N 766 *š^c.t! n snsn nty iy hr d3d3* “the document of breathing which goes under the head” [Stadler (1999), 85].

⁴¹ Martin and Ryholt [(2006), 274] mention another head depicted on the verso of the unpublished formulaic Demotic funerary text P Haun Demot. 1.

label “the papyrus of protection” ($p\beta \underline{d}m^{\epsilon} n s\beta$) is itself an instruction for placement beneath the head.⁴² This is known based on a comparison with the verso of P Cairo 58014 with written instructions “his head” ($\underline{d}\beta \underline{d}\beta = f$) and the verso of P Cairo 58017 with a simple figure of a head. The corresponding parallels for the feet are known from the Demotic text on the verso of P Cairo 58013 with the written instructions “his feet” ($r\bar{t} = f$) and the verso of P Cairo 58022 with a simple figure of two legs.⁴³

While Reich mentioned the “poverty” of the owner of such a papyrus, it seems unlikely that the recipients of such compositions were actually poor. This is another instance where the size and quality of the papyri have led scholars to what may be inaccurate conclusions.⁴⁴ It is interesting that in the formulaic Demotic funerary texts, the individual is never identified according to any professional titles.⁴⁵ Apart from the name of the deceased, most often the patronym is given and in some cases the matronym.⁴⁶ This is discretely different than the more elaborate contemporary funerary papyri.⁴⁷ However, the fact that the deceased was provisioned with such a papyrus at all has implications. According to the manner in which scholars think the papyrus physically accompanied the deceased, it would have been protected in some manner, at

⁴² The designation $p\beta \underline{d}m^{\epsilon} n s\beta$ occurs on four papyri: Brooklyn 37.1797E+ 37.1798E vs [Hughes (2005), 8-9, pl. 12]; Cairo 31171 vs. [Brunsch (1984)]; Louvre E 10304 vs. [unpublished]; Munich 826 vs [unpublished].

⁴³ Legs also appear on the verso of P Florence 3676.

⁴⁴ Mummy labels were also often thought of as cheap substitutes for stelae, but the implications of such a statement about wealth must be ignored [Smith (2002), 235-236]. Cf. Gunn (1916), 81-94.

⁴⁵ Smith [(2002), 238] noted the lack of titles in funerary texts from Panopolis as compared with other areas of Egypt. However, note the Theban provenance attributed to many of the formulaic Demotic funerary texts.

⁴⁶ Occasionally not even a name was supplied. In some cases, this may be the result of the “mass production” of such papyri for ready purchase. However, so far no models have been discovered in which spaces for the deceased’s name is left blank. In P Louvre 10304, the deceased is not identified by name, but his age at death is indicated.

⁴⁷ In P Harkness, only one title is indicated for the deceased, but several titles are indicated for the deceased’s father who was apparently instrumental in the procurement and production of the funerary compositions in the papyrus.

the very least, by mummy wrappings. Without digressing into the full ramifications of this discussion, these papyri would have been either attached to the deceased along with the wrappings or placed in the coffin. The fact that the papyri themselves have been preserved – often in very good condition – attests to the fact they were probably placed in protected areas of the burial such as within the mummy wrappings or inside the coffin.⁴⁸ If we can speculate further from such suggestions, the quality of preservation would seem to indicate that these individuals had enough wealth for what could be termed a standard elite burial of the Roman Period.⁴⁹

Further evidence from outside the realm of papyrology could support such a notion. A major factor which has been ignored in the study of these papyri is the relationship between their textual contexts and the remainder of the funerary assemblage. The very same texts appear on coffins, mummy labels⁵⁰ and stelae⁵¹ accompanying elite burials. This suggests that the papyri were only one option in a "multiplicity of approaches" which Egyptians took to ensure the survival their funerary texts and in turn their "spiritual" existence.⁵² As mummy labels were used often in burials of wealthy individuals, so too could the formulaic papyri accompany an elite individual to the grave. In fact, among the coffin inscriptions of the members of the illustrious Soter family, none provide the titles of the deceased. Therefore, the lack of titles in identifying

⁴⁸ Further confirmed by the Demotic text accompanying BM EA 10209: [see Martin and Ryholt (2006)].

⁴⁹ See Riggs (2003); Dunand and Lichtenberg (1995).

⁵⁰ Mummy labels are an important and occasionally overlooked resource: Spiegelberg (1901); Möller (1913a); Baratte and Boyaval (1974, 1975); Boyaval (1976); Quaegebeur (1978, 1982, 1986); Chaveau (1986, 1990, 1991, 1992); Chaveau and Kyser (1991).

⁵¹ Stelae from Roman Egypt are bountiful, but present specific problems of dating, provenance and context. Early excavations often did not record the exact find spot of these items. Only future, controlled excavations will provide further chronological linchpins which will aid in creating a set of stylistic dating criteria. See *inter alia* Spiegelberg (1932); Abdalla (1992).



⁵² Such practices are nothing new and can be traced back to the earliest scenes and texts placed on tomb walls. For the maintenance of one's existence through collective cultural memory, exemplified by the repetition of one's name, see Assmann (2005), 41-52.

the deceased and the rather modest nature of the papyri themselves should not necessarily suggest that the individual was among the lower economic strata of Egyptian society.

Interpretation of the papyri benefits immensely from their comparison with the objects from their original funerary contexts. Attestations of formulaic phrases, along with variants in grammar, orthography and paleography, show the creativity and variability in their employment. With regard to provenance, the majority of the papyri are attributed to Thebes, often with little evidence. Because most of the papyri have no provenance and entered museum collections through the antiquities market, it is important to keep in mind the possibility that they derive from other places besides Thebes. The texts on other media, especially stelae, are attested from Thebes, but also from Abydos, Akhmim, Dendera and Coptos.

Accompanying the texts on the papyri, stelae and mummy labels are vignettes which have been little studied. Their scenes and motifs offer additional avenues through which we can approach the material. The actual ceremonies during which such texts were recited may be hinted at in the accompanying scenes on funerary stelae. Several Theban (S Turin 1529, S Turin 1567) stelae show the mummified deceased assisted by Anubis as well as the *b3*-bird of the deceased upon a shrine behind an offering table before which a priest holds a Horus censer.⁵³ To provide a further interesting example, Munich Papyrus ÄS 826 contains a frontal depiction of a woman with upraised arms underneath the formulae of the text.⁵⁴ Above the text there is a stylized bird representing the *b3* with outstretched wings hovering over the body of the deceased. Such a layout is designed to mimic a funerary stela on papyrus. No interpretation has been

⁵³ Munro (1973), pl. 21, abb. 75 and 77.

⁵⁴ Müller (1976), 133. It should be noted that the posture itself () resembles the writing of  *k3*.

offered for the pose of the female figure, which has been interpreted as the deceased.⁵⁵ At first glance, the pose is reminiscent of the figures of Nut so often depicted inside coffins and sarcophagi as she manages the sky, but also embraces the deceased. However, the image has a much closer parallel. Frontal depictions of the deceased with upraised arms appear in the famous Terenuthis stela⁵⁶ from the necropolis of the southwestern delta city of Kom Abu Billo.⁵⁷ Figures on these funerary stelae are often shown in what has been called the *orans*, or “praying,” posture with hands spread and raised in the air. While there has been ongoing discussion about the correct interpretation of such postures, it is not substantially different from the praying (*dw3, i3w*) posture of Egyptians for millennia. The unique nature of Egyptian artistic conventions may have obscured the exact reality of the pose as the hands were placed with one appearing slightly behind the other; however, this may have been simply an attempt to show both hands in profile rather than showing the hands slightly out of alignment.

The previous discussion has only dealt with select aspects of the complex nature of the formulaic Demotic funerary texts. In the final version, I envision the dissertation divided into 5 chapters. After an introductory chapter reviewing the literature, establishing methodology and defining terminology, the second chapter will consist of a philological examination of the texts including full text editions with supplements on script, paleography, labels, grammar, lexicography and dating. The third chapter will focus on the vignettes, examining their scenes, motifs, derivations and relationships with texts. Chapter four will contain a discussion of the religious significance of these texts including their meaning, purpose, function and usage with

⁵⁵ Note the significance of the depiction of the deceased in a living form alongside the hovering *b3* and the mummiform deceased, who is also surmounted by a solar disk.

⁵⁶ Winnicki (1992), 351-360; Parlasca (1970), 173-198.

⁵⁷ Hooper (1961).

supplements on the social aspects of their production and consumption. Chapter five will examine the development of Demotic funerary texts from a more general perspective, focusing on their developments from antecedent funerary traditions, their relationship with preceding and contemporary documents and their ultimate disappearance and absorption into other traditions.

It is hoped that this dissertation will add significantly to our knowledge of funerary practices in Roman Period Egypt as well as to our understanding of the development of Egyptian funerary texts. On a philological level, I will bring together a corpus of data which has until now been dispersed. Additionally, the identification and publication of unpublished texts, made possible by generous fellowships from the France Chicago Center and the Nicholson Center for British studies, will significantly increase the corpus as it is now known to scholars. From a historical perspective, I will attempt to demonstrate the way people living in Roman Egypt used and contributed to the native funerary traditions through my investigation of who was involved in consuming and producing these texts, how the texts were employed, where they were found and what implications they have for broader religious practices.⁵⁸ The fact that these texts were copied again and again, often very precisely, has implications for broader religious practice. Were there many templates of such texts kept in temple libraries? Were they simply copied off the stelae from neighboring tombs? Or were such formulae simply memorized by priests during training? The formulae were so ubiquitous and concise, it is quite possible that they simply resided in the collective memory of the population as elements of “common knowledge.” The

⁵⁸ As Mark Depauw summarized in his *Companion*: “As they were useful for the decipherment of Demotic because of their hieroglyphic and hieratic counterparts, these manuscripts [Funerary texts] were intensively studied in the nineteenth century. In the twentieth century little attention was paid to them. Nevertheless their importance is manifold: they are interesting for the text tradition; linguistically for the grammatical archaisms; lexicographically for the ‘technical terms’; they show the sacerdotal and scribal creativity in composition; and finally they offer new information about religious practices” [Depauw (1997), 117]. Cf. the comments of Dieleman (2005), 17-18.

repetitious nature of the texts suggests a sacred tradition while the variation bears witness to the vitality and creativity of Egyptian funerary literature.

III. Conclusion

The native traditions of funerary literature have a long history in Ancient Egypt. Prior to their disappearance and absorption into other movements such as Coptic Christianity, the last native funerary texts were written in the Demotic script in the first four centuries of the Common Era. A handful of Demotic funerary papyri consisted of elaborate passages in combinations often unique to each papyrus (e.g. Papyri Rhind, Papyrus Harkness, Louvre E 3452, Bib. Nat. 149). However, a large corpus of Demotic funerary texts written on a variety of media (papyri, stelae, coffins, sarcophagi, ostraca, mummy boards, mummy bandages, graffiti, mummy labels, etc.) consisted of specific religious formulae which were repeatedly copied and employed for more than two centuries while Egypt was ruled by Roman Emperors. As of yet, the significance of these texts has not been fully investigated. This dissertation seeks to fill that gap. Even though scholars have designated these texts “abbreviated,” their short length in no way implies their abridgement from other more substantial texts. They share important relationships with more elaborate funerary documents, but they also serve as independent wholes in their own right. This is proven by the fact that their complete formulae are copied word for word in numerous examples and portions thereof reproduced in many more. Rather than expressing all the complexities of Egyptian religious philosophy, these texts provide a summarized version of the essential concepts of afterlife theology.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ The formulaic religious phrases express concepts that would have been important to any person in Egypt participating in such funerary rituals. Their common appearance on stelae suggests that no longer was the old *ḥtp-di-ny-sw.t* offering formulae on the lips of passers-by, but the *ḥnh p3 by* formula.

Formulaic Demotic funerary texts represent the last witnesses of funerary customs dating back to the era of our first large corpus of religious texts – the Pyramid Texts. Rather than unsophisticated “abbreviated” documents, they actually attest to the importance, maintenance and revival of native funerary traditions in an increasingly hostile milieu. In spite of the increasing Christianization of Egypt, the millennia old Osirian theology persisted and even experienced a flourishing as documented in the archaeological record and confirmed in the formulaic Demotic funerary texts.⁶⁰ Other traditional deities maintained and increased their roles in the funerary sphere, appearing in vignettes accompanying the deceased in connection with the religious formulae. As the very last texts in the native Egyptian funerary tradition, the formulaic Demotic funerary texts serve as an important source for the development of Egyptian religion into the Christian Era.

⁶⁰ McCleary (1992), 223-229.

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