

For the *Journal of History of Religions* EDWARD F. WENTE has prepared a review of Erik Hornung's seminal book, *Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt: The One and the Many*. He discusses some methodological issues involved in approaching the subject of ancient Egyptian religion, in particular questioning the validity of the dichotomy so frequently made between transcendent and immanent in discussions of the nature of gods, and emphasizes the necessity for assessing the role of the community in our appreciation of the practice of ancient religion. Continuing his interest in Egyptian funerary literature, Wente is investigating the Middle Kingdom Coffin Texts for spells that may have originated in the Old Kingdom in order to shed light on the nature of the commoner's afterlife in the Pyramid Age. He believes that the deceased's identification with the god Osiris, which became possible as part of the so-called democratization of royal funerary prerogatives after the Old Kingdom, should be distinguished from magical identifications with other high gods which may have been available to some commoners even in the Old Kingdom.

In the Spring of 1984 Wente was invited to participate in a conference on the building of the pyramids held in

Washington, D.C. by a public television producer planning a documentary film on the subject. The day-long discussion involved considerably more than the technical aspects of the problem, still very much debated, and attempted to review the sociological, cultural and religious milieu that surrounded the construction of the royal monuments. Wente continues to collaborate with Dr. James E. Harris in the work of identifying the royal mummies of the New Kingdom. This Spring a re-examination of the controversial human remains from Tomb 55 in the Valley of the Kings has called into question some recent theories regarding the family of Akhenaton.