

Edward F. Wente

During 1998/99 **Edward F. Wente** completed his revisions of the Late Egyptian Stories for a new and enlarged edition of *The Literature of Ancient Egypt*, edited by William Kelly Simpson. In addition, he has submitted to the editor new translations of several texts that will be included in this literature volume: some Coffin Text spells of literary interest, the Israel Stela of Merenptah, several penitential hymns from the Ramesside village of Deir el-Medina, and the Myth of the Heavenly Cow, which is the oldest extended mythical narrative surviving from ancient Egypt. Although preserved only in several post-Amarna tombs, including one of Tutankhamun's shrines and Seti I's famous tomb in the Valley of the Kings, the myth was probably composed earlier in the Middle Kingdom. Aside from the narrative and etiological statements that permeate much of the myth, the Heavenly Cow also contains directions for its practical use by non-royalty. It seems that in the New Kingdom the myth and instructions for its use were quite mechanically appropriated for the pharaoh's afterlife without eliminating non-royal aspects of the text.

Wente continues with the task of reviewing Robert Ritner's translations of an extensive corpus of Third Intermediate Period texts to be published in the Society of Biblical Literature series *Writings from the Ancient World*. During his retirement he has still been involved in evaluating manuscripts submitted for publication to the *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, to which he also contributes an occasional book review.
