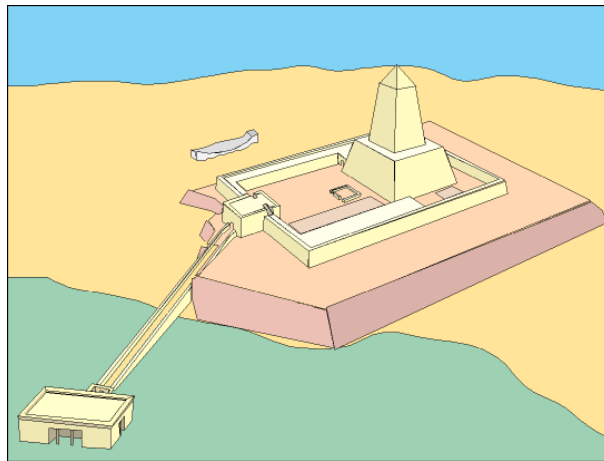




THE CULT OF RE IN THE OLD KINGDOM



by

ELIZABETH GAYE WILSON
BA (*Sydney*) MA (*Macquarie*)

Division of Humanities
Department of Ancient History (Egyptology)

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I, Elizabeth Gaye Wilson, certify that the work presented here has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other university or institution. This thesis is an original piece of research, due acknowledgement being made to the work of others where appropriate.

E. G. Wilson

Image of the reconstruction of $\check{S}p-jb-R^c$ on the title page courtesy of University College London.

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ABSTRACT

Taking as its departure point the Westcar Papyrus story of the divine birth of the first three kings of the Fifth Dynasty, this thesis studies the chronological development of the cult of Re through the titularies of 149 priests, high priests and administrators from the First Dynasty to the late Sixth Dynasty, and attempts to ascertain the influence of the cult on Egyptian society and politics. Many scholars have interpreted the story of the divine birth in Papyrus Westcar as the influence of the priests of Re in putting a new dynasty on the throne. Several conditions would be expected for this to be possible, and these are investigated. After an examination of the high priesthood, the titles in each sun-temple are analysed for patterns of occurrence, types of office, orthography and relationships with other cults. Textual evidence such as the information contained on the Palermo Stone is also considered.

The title of high priest of Re is known from the Old Kingdom in five forms, and these forms are studied in terms of orthography and dating. High priests of Re are known from the First Dynasty to the early Fifth Dynasty, and again from the late Fifth Dynasty onwards. There is a lacuna in the evidence for the middle Fifth Dynasty which is probably the result of the vagaries of excavation.

The titularies of officials at the six Fifth Dynasty sun-temples are analysed for patterns of occurrence, orthography and other titles held. There were three major sun-temples, those of Userkaf, Neferirkare and Neuserre, and these were in use until their closure at the end of the reign of Teti. Each builder of a sun-temple determined the

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character of its cult, and this continued while the temple was in operation. There is evidence that Neuserre commissioned *Tjj*, a royal hairdresser and capable administrator, to conduct an investigation into the logistics of the sun-cult. As a result, two sun-temples were closed, and the titularies of Re-officials changed.

The rise of the Fifth Dynasty sun-temples should be seen, not as a religiously-based political revolution, but as the culmination of a gradual increase in the popularity of the sun-god Re from the Third and Fourth Dynasties.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my parents, who gave me life, raised me, and gave me love and support every single day of this lengthy enterprise.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The closest Egyptian word to PhD in transliteration is *ph̄d*, which means, according to Faulkner, “cut up, cut open, sever”. The very next word in his *Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian* is also very relevant to the process of writing a PhD thesis: *ph̄dw*, “chair”. Writing a thesis of any type and length involves a great deal of cutting up (your life), cutting open (your soul, and, as sportswriter Red Smith once put it,¹ opening a vein), and severing (from family, friends and life in general), whilst sitting on a chair in front of a computer or in a library. A thesis writer depends on family and friends to understand, or at least accept, the unavoidable extended periods of no contact, frustration, depression and exhilaration. This particular thesis has taken an exceptionally long time to complete, due to extended illness, and it is inevitable that someone’s assistance eight or ten years ago will have been forgotten. My thanks to all those whom I have forgotten.

My grateful thanks are due in particular to the following people, without whom this work would not have progressed. No particular order of importance is implied.

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¹ Quoted in Brohaugh, *Just Open A Vein* (Cincinnati, 1987), Introduction.

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PREFACE

Patterns can be used to draw knowledge. I learned that very early on. All one needs is the right designs painted in the proper sequences and proportions, and one can revisit the past. Not as it was, but what remnants it leaves behind. Everything sheds skin. Things are left for us to find. If we are lucky, we stumble across them: study, classify, come to our own conclusions.¹

This thesis is basically a study of patterns: of people, of titles, of locations, of dates, of orthography, of details. The amount of material dating to the Old Kingdom is small, especially when compared with later periods, and over 85% of the people in the prosopography are known only partially due to plunder or incomplete preservation, excavation or publication. As with all Old Kingdom material, the results obtained are not statistically valid nor are they to be considered a complete picture of the cult of Re in the Old Kingdom. There are some important lacunas in this material, and a complete picture is not possible without further evidence.

Conventions used

The following conventions are used throughout this work.

¹ Jones, J. V., *The Barbed Coil* (London, 1998), 480.

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Royal names

Following Allen,² small capitals are used to denote royal names which are written with cartouches in the original Egyptian, for example *S3HW-R^c*, SAHURE. Royal names enclosed in a serekh are written in underlined small capitals: *S3HW-R^c*.

Date notation

The common practice of dating monuments to a general period or dynasty rather than individual reigns is of limited use in this type of research. An attempt has been made, therefore, in all cases to date monuments and individuals as precisely as possible. Where it is impossible to date by other means, dates have been suggested on the basis of titles held in the cult of Re as they fit into the patterns discovered in the course of my research.

The software used for this research could only sort dates in numeral format. Therefore, in order to date the material according to specific reigns, the date notation system used by Yvonne Harpur³ has been adapted and is used as follows:

Reigns are written in the form *x.y*, where *x* represents the dynasty, and *y* represents the king. For example, the date 5.3 means Neferirkare, the third king of the Fifth Dynasty. Less precise dates are noted in the following formats:

x.01	early Dynasty <i>x</i> , but unable to be attributed to any particular reign
x.55	mid Dynasty <i>x</i> , also unable to be strictly or closely attributable to a particular king
x.99	late Dynasty <i>x</i>

Therefore 4.99–5.01 means that the material can be loosely dated to the end of the Fourth Dynasty or the beginning of the Fifth.

² Allen, James P., *Middle Egyptian: An Introduction to the Language and Culture of Hieroglyphs* (Cambridge, 2000), 30.

³ Harpur, Yvonne, *Decoration in Egyptian tombs of the Old Kingdom: studies in orientation and scene content* (London, 1987).

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The beginning, middle and end of a particular reign is noted in a similar fashion:

x.y01	= Dynasty x , Reign y , beginning of the reign	e.g. 6.401 = early Pepy II
x.y55	= Dynasty x , Reign y , middle of the reign	e.g. 6.455 = mid Pepy II
x.y99	= Dynasty x , Reign y , end of the reign	e.g. 6.499 = end Pepy II

A date which could be extended after the suggested earliest date, but for which there is no suggested latest date is denoted with an arrow (Π). Therefore a date of 5.1 Π means the reign of Userkaf or later.

A list of kings and their date notation is shown below.

Reign	King	Reign	King	Reign	King
<i>FIRST DYNASTY</i> ⁴		<i>SECOND DYNASTY</i>		<i>THIRD DYNASTY</i>	
1.1	Narmer	2.1	Hetepsekhemwy	3.1	Djoser
1.2	Aha	2.2	Raneb	3.2	Sekhemkhet
1.3	Djer	2.3	Ninetjer	3.3	Khaba
1.4	Djet	2.4	Weneg	3.4	Sanakht
1.5	Den	2.5	Sened	3.5	Huni
1.6	Anedjib	2.6	Peribsen		
1.7	Semerket	2.7	Khasekhemwy		
1.8	Qa'a				
<i>FOURTH DYNASTY</i>		<i>FIFTH DYNASTY</i>		<i>SIXTH DYNASTY</i>	
4.1	Sneferu	5.1	Userkaf	6.1	Teti
4.2	Khufu	5.2	Sahure	6.2	Pepy I
4.3	Djedefre	5.3	Neferirkare	6.3	Merenre
4.4	Khafre	5.4	Shepseskare	6.4	Pepy II
4.5	Menkaure	5.5	Neferefre		
4.6	Shepseskaf	5.6	Neuserre		
		5.7	Menkauhor		
		5.8	Djedkare Isesi		
		5.9	Unas		

Terminology

Throughout this work the following terms are used.

⁴ The kings listed in the First, Second and Third Dynasties are according to Wilkinson, *Early Dynastic Egypt* (London, 1999), 27.

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Title: This term is used according to Berlev's definition: "different categories or different usages of phrases which we broadly term titles, ie all the offices, positions, ranks, designations of profession, indicators of social status, in a word all that it is acceptable in Egyptology to term 'titles'".⁵ In addition, the word "title" is used here to denote an occupation, such as "fisherman".

Priesthood: A generic term, used mostly when referring to all the priestly titles belonging to a particular institution or temple, e.g. the high priesthood refers to the five titles discussed in Chapter 3, i.e. *wr m3*, *m3 #wr*, *wr #n3 #wnw*, *m3 wr Jwnw* and *wr m3 m prwj*. Where a particular title is meant, the title or its translation is used, e.g. the high priests of Re (meaning *wr m3/m3 #wr*), the high priests of Heliopolis (meaning *wr #n3 #wnw*). This practice is unlike that used by McFarlane in *The God Min*,⁶ who uses the term "priesthood" for each individual title.

Administrator: Generic term used for people who held non-priestly titles in a cult complex.

Royal Institution: Generic term for building complexes dedicated to the king: pyramid complexes, sun-temples, royal mortuary complexes and *mrt* temples.

Abbreviations used

Abbreviations in the tables for the various cemeteries are the conventions used in Porter and Moss, *A Topographical Bibliography*:

⁵ Berlev, quoted in Quirke, S., "The Regular Titles of the Late Middle Kingdom", *Rd'E* 37 (1986), 107 and n. 5.

⁶ McFarlane, Ann, *The God Min to the End of the Old Kingdom* (Sydney, 1995).

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Abbreviation	Cemetery
Gîza CF	Gîza Central Field
Gîza EF	Gîza East Field
Gîza WF	Gîza West Field
pu	position unknown
Saqqâra ESP	Saqqâra East of the Step Pyramid
Saqqâra NSP	Saqqâra North of the Step Pyramid
Saqqâra SP	Saqqâra Step Pyramid
Saqqâra TPC	Saqqâra Teti Pyramid Cemetery
Saqqâra WSP	Saqqâra West of the Step Pyramid

Transliteration

Where titles or names are written in transliteration, final weak consonants are not usually indicated except where it is normal usage by Egyptologists and to omit it would create confusion. In personal names, final weak consonants are only used if that is the spelling used by Ranke,⁷ or if it is actually written in the original source. Titles are generally transliterated as written throughout the thesis: prepositions are not included where they are missing in the original;⁸ plurals are not employed unless they are actually shown in the original hieroglyphs. For instance, no Old Kingdom example of the plural of *wr m3* exists, therefore *wr m3* is used for both singular and plural. Similarly, whilst an overseer of priests was probably pronounced *jmj-r ḥmw-ntr*, it is usually written simply as *jmj-r ḥm-ntr*, and is treated as such here. Capital letters are used to introduce personal names, and the names of institutions such as pyramids and sun-temples.

⁷ Ranke, Hermann, *Die ägyptischen Personennamen*, 3 vols. (Glückstadt, 1935, 1952, 1977).

⁸ Use or omission of the preposition *m* in sun-temple titles actually turned out to be a minor dating criterion.

Preface

The raw data on which this thesis is based are contained in the Prosopography (Chapter 9), which is preceded by a coloured page for easy reference. Readers may therefore choose to read the prosopography first, last or as individual entries are discussed, according to their own style or interest.

In the Prosopography, catalogue numbers and object numbers, where known, are included in square brackets []. For example, Catalogue Générale 3 in the Cairo Museum is shown as [CG 3]. Tomb numbers are so designated. Bibliographical details mentioned in the Prosopography are not exhaustive. Only those used are cited.

ABBREVIATIONS

<i>AJA</i>	<i>American Journal of Archaeology</i>
<i>ASAE</i>	<i>Annales du Service des Antiquités de l'Égypte</i>
<i>BAR</i>	Breasted, James Henry, <i>Ancient Records of Egypt: Historical Documents from the Earliest Times to the Persian Conquest</i> , vol. I (Chicago, 1906)
<i>BIFAO</i>	<i>Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale</i>
<i>BMFA</i>	<i>Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston</i>
<i>BMMA</i>	<i>Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art</i>
<i>CAH</i>	<i>Cambridge Ancient History</i>
<i>CdE</i>	<i>Chronique d'Égypte</i>
<i>DE</i>	<i>Discussions in Egyptology</i>
<i>GM</i>	<i>Göttinger Miszellen</i> (Göttingen, 1972–)
<i>HESPOK</i>	Smith, <i>A History of Egyptian Sculpture and Painting in the Old Kingdom</i> (New York, 1978).
<i>JARCE</i>	<i>Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt</i>
<i>JEA</i>	<i>Journal of Egyptian Archaeology</i>
<i>JNES</i>	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
<i>LÄ</i>	<i>Lexikon der Ägyptologie</i> (Wiesbaden, 1975–)
<i>LAAA</i>	<i>Liverpool Annals of Archaeology and Anthropology</i>
<i>MDAIK</i>	<i>Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts Kairo</i>
<i>MIO</i>	<i>Mitteilungen des Institut für Orientforschung</i>
<i>MMJ</i>	<i>Metropolitan Museum Journal</i>
<i>PM</i>	Porter, B., and R.L.B. Moss, <i>Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Reliefs and Paintings</i> , 8 vols. (Oxford, 1930–2000).
<i>PSBA</i>	<i>Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology</i>
<i>Rd'E</i>	<i>Revue d'Égyptologie</i>
<i>SAK</i>	<i>Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur</i>
<i>Urk. I</i>	Sethe, Kurt, <i>Urkunden des alten Reiches</i> , vol. I (Leipzig, 1933)
<i>Wb.</i>	<i>Wörterbuch der ägyptische Sprache</i>
<i>WZKM</i>	<i>Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes</i>
<i>ZÄS</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde</i>