

### The Judgement of the Dead as a Ritual

Little has been written about the background of the expression "Calculation of the Difference" (*hsb.t '3w*). Clère discovered that it designates the tribunal which the deceased had to pass before gaining entry to the Netherworld. Others have referred to these findings, but no one has paid more than passing attention to the matter.<sup>103</sup> Nevertheless, the texts under discussion provide crucial information on the way the Egyptians viewed the Judgement of the Dead. For if the deceased had to go through the "Calculation of the Difference" on the way to Sais, this can only mean that the burial rites included a ceremonial passage of the divine tribunal.

There were two concurring viewpoints on the appearance of this tribunal. On the one hand, it was believed to be a court session intended to determine whether or not the deceased was guilty of sin. To this end, his heart was weighed on a balance against the feather of Truth. Moreover, he had to prove his innocence before Osiris and his forty-two judges. There are spread references to this "allgemeine Totengericht" (as Grieshammer calls it) in the CT, but it is more common to find the Judgement of the Dead to be patterned after the model of the mythical tribunal deciding in the case of Horus against Seth. In the myth, Seth killed his brother Osiris and usurped kingship from him. But Horus, Osiris' son, summoned Seth, and the court finally decided in Horus' favour. As a result, Horus was appointed king of Egypt, while Osiris became king of the Netherworld. Now since the deceased was identified with Osiris (and often with Horus), he was one of the actors in the myth, and the tribunal was of very direct relevance to him. Only if he could win the trial against Seth was it possible for him to be justified (*m3' hrw*) and take the place of Osiris, king of the Netherworld.<sup>104</sup>

This complex of thoughts is constantly referred to in texts and representations of the navigation to Sais, although the true meaning does not always transpire at first sight. All essentials are grouped together in the Merenptah inscription. After the mummification process, Osiris is justified and proclaimed king in the presence of the two enneads and the Two State Chapels. On Osiris' arrival at Sais, his enemies are destroyed.<sup>105</sup> Since anonymous enemies are often referred to as the deceased's opponents before court, their destruction and Osiris' coronation represent cause and effect of his legal victory. It is not without reason, therefore, that Assmann concludes that the Merenptah inscription culminates in the Judgement of the

<sup>103</sup> Clère, *BIFAO* 30 (1931), 425-447, particularly 441-444; cf. Settgast, *Bestattungsdarstellungen*, 76, 80; Grieshammer, *Jenseitsgericht*, 48-49, 105. Without making reference to this M.K. evidence, Schott already argued that some burial rites symbolised a tribunal session (*Pyramidenkult*, 185-191). Cf. also Montet, *La vie quotidienne*, 299-300; Yoyotte, *SourcesOr* 4, 66. Yoyotte collected evidence on the *sbh.t 3h.t* which he, too, associates with Osiris' place of embalmment. His evidence shows that the enemies of the god were ceremonially killed in the Portal, just as happened in the Judgement of the Dead (*EPHE* 89 [1980-81], 99-102; ref. due to Mrs Hanna den Heyer-Nawrocka).

<sup>104</sup> Grieshammer, *Jenseitsgericht*, 111-115 and *passim*.

<sup>105</sup> Verse 85-135. In verse 94, I read *m-b3h-' psd.ty* instead of Assmann's *m-b3h-' psd.t*.

Dead.<sup>106</sup> The important point is that precisely in this context, the inscription mentions some of the “text column gods” individually, stating that their position is left and right, and at head and feet of the deceased. Moreover, the text refers to the two enneads as courts of justice. The logic underlying the text columns would thus appear to be that the deceased is pictured in the presence of a divine tribunal which protects him, or rather in the presence of the priests “playing” the tribunal.

The journey to Sais and the arrival there seem thus to have incorporated Osiris’ coronation and the defeat of his enemies. There is also M.K. evidence to corroborate this hypothesis. CT spells 1-26 form a coherent liturgy, ascribed by Assmann to the *Stundenwachen*.<sup>107</sup> The first spells refer to Osiris’ resurrection. After having re-acquired his bodily functions, the deceased/Osiris receives clothes, shoes, a walking stick and weapons “for the road”.<sup>108</sup> After having been urged to proceed to the divine tribunal and be justified against his enemies (e.g. CT I, 10c-f [3]) he faces the trial, which is described in various terms (CT spells 7-9, 15-18, 24 (I, 74d)).<sup>108a</sup>

In spell 15, the judgement against Osiris’ enemy is pronounced by Neith, which seems unmistakable evidence in favour of our hypothesis that the trial took place near Sais (CT I, 45d, 46d). In this context, a god named *bn-k3* is ordered to pull the bonds of a bull (CT I, 45c). I believe that this hostile action refers to a ritual slaughtering of a bull impersonating Seth. This personification is not uncommon in slaughtering rites, and is hinted at in our series of CT spells.<sup>109</sup> In spell 17, the priest impersonating Horus is said to have hindered “the steps of the one who murdered his father Osiris” (*sm3 it=f*) — evidently Seth in the form of a *sm3*-bull (as in e.g. CT VI, 217j-k). The text also mentions the presence of the two enneads, who give the deceased power over the gods. The same state of affairs is described in PT Utt. 580. The bull Seth — here called “he who smote my (i.e. Horus’) father, he who murdered one greater than he” (*hwl it<=i> sm3 wr r=f*) is killed by the Horus priest. After that, his meat is distributed among the participants in the ritual, each of whom has the name of one of the members of the two enneads. That the ceremonial tribunal incorporated an offering meal is also suggested by a passage like CT III, 304c-d, where “the presentation of victuals” is apparently another formulation for

<sup>106</sup> MDAIK 28.1 (1972), 66, n. 49.

<sup>107</sup> LÄ VI, 105. The N.K. title (“spell of setting up the bier”) suggests a relation with the funerary bed around which the *Stundenwachen* took place. Similar ideas may already underlie the use of the texts in the M.K., for they are attested on the funerary bed T4X (Arnold and Settgast, MDAIK 20 (1965), 60, n. 1).

<sup>108</sup> CT I, 10b [3], 71h-72a [23]. A detailed account of my understanding of these texts will be published separately. Note that comparable objects were deposited in the coffin (Hassan, *Stöcke und Stäbe*, 115-116). A similar relation between clothing and judgement is found in CT spell 149.

<sup>108a</sup> Cf. CT spell 235.

<sup>109</sup> CT I, 52a [17], 74d [24], cf. CT I, 193b-e [45], 249c-250f [60], CT VI, 156-157 [556], particularly 157f. Neith, “the mistress of Sais” is also mentioned in CT VI, 252b [630] (as a judge) and in CT IV, 30k [281], in connection with glorification, the deceased’s appearance in the Eastern horizon — related issue, as we shall see —, his acquirement of power and the presence of the two enneads. Cf. also Urk VI, 93,21-95,9.

"the Calculation of the Difference" (cf. CT III, 314a). Similarly, a term which must possibly be read *hsb.t* '3w (CT VII, 16f [817]) occurs in the context of judgement and food-offerings. This textual evidence on a ritual slaughtering near Sais is paralleled in depictions of slaughterings and food-offerings in scenes of the "Saisfahrt".<sup>110</sup>

But the divine tribunal re-enacted near Sais not only consisted in the killing of Osiris' enemy (in the form of a bull). According to the Merenptah inscription, the deceased was also proclaimed king. In the texts just referred to, the two conceptions appear to be closely intertwined. In CT I, 37b-38a [11], for instance, the deceased/Osiris is referred to as being "justified against his enemies, for he has assumed his two *wrr.t*-crowns, for the thrones of Geb have advanced toward him, after he prevented that the Other (Seth) would harm him".<sup>111</sup> Derchain pointed out the close affinities between the *wrr.t* crown and the crown of justification. The presentation of this latter crown to a god (notably Harendotes) formed the climax of a series of temple rites aiming at the defeat of the god's enemies and his investment as a king. The rite was also performed for mummies, with the effect that the deceased achieved kingly status.<sup>112</sup> One text referring to this ritual makes clear that the justification was supposed to take place near the Winding Waterway (*mr n h3*), a concept which is already hinted at in PT Utt 265, 548 and 697.<sup>113</sup> It is certainly not coincidental, therefore, if we also find references to the *mr n h3* in the CT spells we are dealing with. After the tribunal session, "those who are in the Winding Waterway" are said to rejoice (CT I, 53f-g [18]). Even clearer is the text in CT spell 61. Having received the attire of kingship (CT I, 257d-258f), the deceased occupies his throne in the bark. "You sit in the ship of God, while you harpoon the hippopotamus in the Winding Waterway, every god being your harpooner" (CT I, 259a-c, cf. 268d-270g [62]). Again, the deceased's justification and the defeat of his enemy — here not a bull but a hippopotamus — are on a par. The texts from which the above evidence was drawn belong, moreover, to the same group which refers to the divine tribunal near Sais. Tomb scenes from the O.K. confirm the impression created by the texts just studied. In many of these, the coffin is shown while being ferried across a winding waterway to Sais.<sup>114</sup>

<sup>110</sup> For other texts where the tribunal, justification or the defeat of enemies are associated with victual offerings, see e.g. CT spells 4, 22, 225. For depictions of slaughterings and victual offerings in the context of Sais, see Altenmüller, *LÄ I*, 752-753; Moussa-Altenmüller, *Das Grab des Nianchchnum und Chnumhotep*, Mainz, 1977, 48-50.

<sup>111</sup> Cf. also CT I, 14b-15b [4-5] (cf. Borghouts, *OMRO* 51 [1971], 199 ff.), 23c [7], 41-42 [13], 178b-q [42], 187a-c (cf. Assmann, *Liturgische Lieder*, 177-179), 190d-e [44], 196h-197f, 199c-g, 202b-c [46], 224g-225a, 228e-f [50], 268b-h [62], all from the kind of glorification spells interesting us. Cf. further CT spell 256.

<sup>112</sup> *CdE* XXX, no. 60 (1955), 232, 238-239. Cf. Yoyotte, *Sources Or* 4, 37-38. The mummy still lying in coffin M1 is a M.K. instance. It wears a diadem with a uraeus.

<sup>113</sup> Derchain, o.c., 225.

<sup>114</sup> Settgast, *Bestattungsdarstellungen*, 65 ff. and pl. 6. The nine chapels often represented near Sais hint at a relationship with an ennead.