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NEUNTER BAND

DAVID O'CONNOR AND DAVID P. SILVERMAN (EDS.)

ANCIENT EGYPTIAN KINGSHIP

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EDITED BY

DAVID O'CONNOR

AND

DAVID P. SILVERMAN

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CHAPTER ONE

KINGSHIP, DEFINITION OF CULTURE, AND LEGITIMATION

John Baines

Introduction: Context, Previous Studies, Strategies of Legitimation

Ancient Egypt is significant for the general phenomenon of kingship, both as an exceptionally long-lived example of the institution and because it strongly poses the problem of the king's divinity. Kingship is almost always associated with religious values: rulers are very often credited with divine power and status as well as divine sanction and support. These characteristics were present in full measure in Egypt. The extremes of cults of living rulers found in some societies do not seem to have occurred in Egypt, but such monuments as the Great Pyramid, and in a broader way the endless undertakings of Ramses II, illustrate the extent to which the king could dominate Egyptian society and appropriate its resources.

Although the living context of Egyptian kingship is gone, and the understanding of much in it is uncertain or based on analogy with more immediately accessible cases, the institution has other paradigmatic qualities. It also fully demonstrates the capacity of royal symbols and of discourse expressed in terms of royalty to survive political change and the ebb and flow of power. Egypt was the first large "nation state," with a culture virtually restricted to that state, and thus was very self-contained. This clarity of definition seems to go with a rather low level of conflict to form a limiting case of a stable monarchy and society, in which kingship was an unquestioned presupposition of social order—indeed order was hardly conceivable without it. Even if the word "pharaoh" is a distraction that should be removed from discussion as anachronistic for much of Egyptian history, the king of Egypt remains the principal symbol of his country.

Despite this centrality, the institution of kingship and individual

holders of office needed continual legitimation in order to maintain its status in the face of developments that might devalue it or rob it of sanctity and efficacy. In Egypt, changes analogous to secularization took a distinctive form—a drawing-apart of religion and kingship and a slow desacralization of the latter, rather than a secularization in the modern sense. This pattern might be compared with pluralizing developments in other ancient and more recent societies. The enormous time span available for examining social phenomena and processes in Egypt has the disadvantage of suppressing the actors' perspective on such changes as this realignment of kingship and religion, but it allows one to make correlations of developments in society and in kingship that might be impracticable for shorter periods or between societies.

A vital aspect of the lost living context is ritual, which is central to modern discussion of divine kingship and was as fundamental to Egyptian kingship as it is to others (Hornung 1957, 1966; see also Chapter 3 §3.2 of this volume). Evidence for ritual and ritual change is insufficient to shed much light on the questions I address in this chapter, but its presence must be borne in mind as the living background to my mainly literary material. Ritual is central both to the king's assumption of whatever divinity he may have and to the negotiation of his exercise of power. It cloaks the holder in the mantle of his office and insulates him from the surrounding everyday world. It defines, enacts and persuades, and in these living processes it may also soften the rigidity of written and iconographic presentation; its performance may mobilize both solidarity and divergences of interests to complement the monarch's lonely supremacy. It often restricts and constrains the ruler into accepted and acceptable patterns of behavior and so acts as a check on power. How far ritual robs him of freedom of action is open to dispute (here Assmann 1984b, may go too far), but powerful Egyptian kings did so much that was autocratic and exploitive that they must have retained considerable independence, in addition to taking advantage of the authority vested in their office.

The problem of the king's divinity and its definition has been the principal focus of Egyptological discussions since Alexandre Moret's *Du caractère religieux de la royauté pharaonique* (1902). This issue can be approached through characterizations of the king in titularies, discursive texts and iconography, through his role and actions, or through negative constraints—limitations on his status and authority. Answers that have been given to how far the king was divine have varied from its almost fervent exaltation in Henri Frankfort's classic *Kingship and the Gods* (1948) to the deliberate skepticism of Georges Posener's *De la divinité du pharaon* (1960, with valuable survey of earlier discussions, viii-xv), which was presented in large part as a corrective to views like those of Frankfort. During the generation since Posener's book, much has been written on the detail of kingship and there have been fundamental contributions to aspects of the problem, such as Erik Hornung's work on the king's historical role (1957), encapsulated in his *Geschichte als Fest* (1966), and Eberhard Otto's article on legitimation (1969). The only author to approach a synthesis during that time, however, was Dietrich Wildung, in his review of stages or levels of royal divinity (1973, reviewing Habachi 1969) principally on the basis of iconographic evidence. Other important contributions have come from this rich field (for example, Radwan 1985). Iconography shows great subtlety and complexity in its presentation of the king, who is the central pivot of the Egyptian system of representational decoration, but it records official or public, and hence mostly supportive, definitions of the king's person and role.

In their *Pharaon. Les secrets du pouvoir* (1988), Marie-Ange Bonhême and Annie Forgeau offer a new synthesis of most aspects of kingship, which they set in the general context of the land of Egypt and the succession of its dynasties; their work is oriented principally to the later periods of Egyptian history. Like many Egyptologists today, they tend to restrict the scope of the king's divinity (e.g., 1988, 319-20), and thus provide a useful corrective to images of the institution that have been common outside Egyptology. Their work is valuable in surveying a wide range of questions and has important ideas about some phenomena hardly brought into the discussion hitherto, such as the kingly child gods of the Late Period. Some parts of their argument, however, are not abreast of recent work; moreover, in keeping with the nature and audience of their book, they only occasionally cite the precise evidence for their conclusions, rendering some of the argument difficult to evaluate.

Kingship is so central to Egyptian culture, so complex and multi-faceted, that no single approach can exhaust its significance; its meaning can be illuminated from many directions. The diverse papers in the present volume demonstrate this point to the full,

and the subject continues to stimulate new studies and provide new general insights into ancient Egypt.

Egyptian kingship originated in the Fourth millennium BC, before or concomitantly with the state (Chapter 3), and was the state's central institution, lasting for more than three thousand years, into Roman times (Derchain 1962). Although its office-holders came in the end to be absentee Roman emperors, the kingship never itself dissolved, but was overtaken by events, especially the rise of Christianity in the Roman Empire.

State and kingship emerged in a period from which the recoverable expression of ideology is restricted to wealth differentials, some features of architecture, the distribution of sites, and iconography. Continuous expositions of ideas of kingship were not written until more than a millennium later. There is, however, evidence for continuity in ideas between the earliest unified, monarchical state and later times, and early kings will have needed legitimation as much as later ones; in Chapter 3 of this book, I attempt to mobilize this continuity of forms and ideas for the study of early kingship. Here, I focus on the later discourse of continuous texts, with the intention to relate kings and kingship to their elite social context—the only context of discourse that can be recovered—and to long-term social change. These issues form a foil to that of the king's divinity. The king was a human mortal with a divine role in an "everlasting" office and institution—as the texts constantly term it to be. Both poles of this identification were continually renegotiated and redefined, and its formal reenactment by successive incumbents continued into the Fourth century AD. I can only select examples from this vast range of material here, and my presentation of the post-New Kingdom period (after *c.* 1070 BC) is no more than a sketch.

Throughout Egyptian history, discourse in terms of kingship was the essential mode of discussion about the central state and its power, and for long periods it was vital to the presentation of relations between humanity and the cosmos. Culture was defined in terms of kingship; no centrally sanctioned alternative existed. The known presentation of ideology and cosmos is an elite phenomenon, and little can be said about ideas in the rest of society. There were, however, surely differences in belief between ruler and ruled, and some statements of elite members imply a broader moral context in which the definition of kingship might be sited

and human nonroyal leaders might have a significant role. Kings too utilized some of the same conceptions, but they naturally had little interest in disseminating their privileges. Developments in royal ideology that were in response to elite, and therefore in a limited sense "democratizing," pressure were probably either reactive or preemptive, in the latter case seeking to influence changes before they took root (see e.g., Fecht 1978).

The elite character of the preserved material has another important implication. Most of it is embedded in or constitutes works of art—architectural, representational, or verbal. It thus entered into specialized traditions with their own complex webs of convention and association. The interpretation of these traditions in relation to conceptions of kingship is thus doubly complex. This separate character of the material is evident enough in the case of visual art, but for texts too there is a gulf between the spoken and the slowly evolving written forms, even where the written genre is close to the spoken in its probable function and contexts. Works of art refer to the conventions and discourse of other works more readily than they refer to new outside factors. Where they incorporate new material, they may present it very strongly in terms of older practices or transform it so that it becomes hard to recognize. Kingship must be seen through these artistic and literary webs.

A very common, though seldom overt, theme in the sources is the legitimation of kings and kingship, and hence, by implication, of aspects of the institution that might be questioned. However monolithic and even indispensable a major institution is and however much it displays its self-assurance, it must continually reaffirm its right to exist. Legitimation has several basic strategies, such as ritual and persuasive discourse, to which I have already alluded. Royal display, including works of art and major monuments, forms another crucial strand. Legitimation uses a restricted range of ideological foundations, defined for ancient Egypt by Otto (1969, 385-89) as being royal action or efficacy, inheritance (not discussed in this chapter) or succession, and myth. In a different perspective, it may be explicit within a society, or the observer may consider that a feature legitimizes an institution, whether or not this is the understanding of the actors. In practice, these two cases may be impossible to distinguish, and I use the term "legitimation" indifferently for both. My focus is diffe-

rent from that of Otto, who was concerned chiefly to explore the implications of the three principal strategies just cited. His classification provides a valuable background against which an analysis of royal and nonroyal discourse can be set and related to a possible political setting. The modern concept of legitimation does not correspond to a single ancient term, while features of the material that can be related to it cut across other possible classifications, but these facts should not cast doubt on the reality of the phenomenon or on the validity of Otto's approach.

Because the kingship was so dominant, even dissent from official views of the institution was mostly formulated in royal terms, following a covert strategy that had advantages over a direct attack. So, in asking how kingship was legitimized and questioned, the restriction to royal and near-royal sources, which is imposed by the preservation of evidence, has positive aspects in that it creates a focus on discussion that was influential in its time and often entered into later tradition. This material allows one to study some of the shading that surrounds the stark outlines of kingship, and so provides a textual analogy for the cushioning effect of ritual. Another possible approach is to focus on what nonroyal inscriptions have to say about attitudes to the king or to kingship. Ursula Rössler-Köhler (1991) has explored these texts very fully for the first millennium BC and has demonstrated a progressive weakening of the prestige of kingship; this result is in harmony with my discussion, which is based on different sources (pp. 35-42 ahead).

In later sections, I review central definitions of the king's role before surveying material relating to change and dissent from the entire span of Egyptian history. Because I focus on these aspects, works of visual and architectural art, in which such matters can seldom be clearly identified, play only a minor part, vital though they are to legitimation in general and to the definition and projection of kingship. Changing conceptions of kingship and of its position in society and cosmos must be seen against the fact that the institution, several of whose phases are discussed in other chapters of this book, had existed for many centuries before periods from which even the most fragmentary and indirect indications of public discussion are preserved. The inextricable association of cosmos and kingship might come to seem inevitable to the actors, but in a large, complex society people's ideas could not be totally constrained. Alternative constructions of cosmos and society were probably always available. Even though evidence for

them is slight to nonexistent, the possibility that they existed, together with the extremely restricted range of the social contexts from which preserved evidence is derived, should be borne in mind.

Central Definitions of Kingship and Royal Control: Early Developments

The first element in the king's titulary stated that he manifested an aspect of the principal god of early times, Horus, and that he had his chief being in the focal institutional and physical location of the royal palace. The first king of the First Dynasty was Horus Aha "The Fighter"; other Horus names emphasized the god's and the king's aggressive aspects or stated an aspect of the god's position in the pantheon, and hence of the king as a manifestation of him. Further titles identified him with the "Two Ladies," the tutelary goddesses of the two parts of Egypt, and with the "Golden Horus" (meaning obscure). The best known royal titles are *nswt-bity*, which combines two words for king and can be rendered "Dual King" (the title is also closely connected with the "Two Lands" of Egypt), and "Son of Re," which asserts that the king is the son—in mythology the bodily son—of the sun-god, the leading deity of the Old Kingdom (*c.* 2575-2134 BC). The names following these last two titles were written in cartouches, which were probably protective symbols and associated the king with the solar cycle. In the classic form, from the Middle Kingdom (*c.* 2000 BC) on, the *nswt-bity* name was a statement of the king's relation to the sun-god Re—Thutmose IV (1401-1391 BC), for example, was the "Enduring One of the Manifestations of Re" (e.g., Krauss 1978, 122-32)—and the Son of Re name was the ruler's own birth name, often with additional epithets.

The king manifested on earth aspects of the gods, but he was himself a god only insofar as there was no term for a being intermediate between human and god. He was a "perfect god." This common title was placed before a cartouche name and probably limited his divinity while stating that he had matured into a divine role in the kingship (cf. Berlev 1981, 362-65); it is almost unknown for full deities. Very occasionally the king bore the title "major god," that is, god in the full sense, but this seems to have been only in cases when he was in some sense deified (Baines 1983, 22). A being who could be deified was not a god like the other gods (see the comment of Habachi, 1969, vii).

In texts from the Middle Kingdom on, the concentrated statements of the titulary were expanded in eulogies, often interspersed among the titles themselves or elaborated into introductions which formed the initial sections of compositions preserved on royal stelae and other monuments that continued with narratives of the king's exploits. These texts are metrically and thematically complex, and are probably the written counterparts of a much older oral practice. The lack of similar early material should be related to the slow expansion of written genres (cf. Baines 1988) rather than to changes in practice or belief. Among material from the Old Kingdom are brief eulogies of kings preserved in addresses to the living by elite tomb owners (e.g., Roccati 1982, 96-98; Kaplony 1968); to include such a passage would no doubt have enhanced their owners' standing with kings, and they were probably widespread in spoken contexts. Later "loyalist" instructions fused advice from father to son or master to pupil with political ideas (e.g., Posener 1976).

In iconography, the king appeared either by himself or, increasingly, on more or less equal terms in company with deities. When he was shown with human beings, he was at a much larger scale than they, and thus could be seen as a different order of being from them—although the same convention applied to the representation of tomb owners in relation to their dependents. Until the mid-second millennium BC, human beings could not be depicted interacting with the gods; similar restrictions operated more weakly in later periods. The king, therefore, occupied an intermediate and intermediary position between the gods and humanity, but in scale and context, representations of him connected him more obviously with the gods. This presentation is an aspect of a system of decorum pervading pictorial representation and texts (Baines 1985a, 277-305; 1986, 44-49), but it also demonstrates an ideological reality of exclusion: people are of little account.

In all periods the king depended on the gods; he was not a "god-king" who might dominate them, even if, because he was one and they were many, and he was present on earth, he might be more prominent than any one of them. His position is clearly stated in a description of his role in the solar cult perhaps dating to the Middle Kingdom (Assmann 1970), which divides the beings of the cosmos into four categories: the gods; the king; the spirits of the dead; and humanity. The king "propitiates" the gods, "gives

mortuary offerings" to the spirits, and "judges" humanity. These three actions convey the problematic of his position. He is marginal to the world of the gods, yet through him they rely on this world and on human efforts to sustain them and the cosmos. They must be propitiated because they are not predictable and they might at any time act capriciously or destructively. Despite his dominance of the iconographic and written record, the king is inferior to the gods: from late predynastic times he was shown receiving the gift of life from them (Kaplony 1963, vol. 3, plate 5, figure 5; Figure 3.6 here). He can be the "son" or "beloved" of any deity, both of these being positions of subordination or dependence. He relates more simply to the dead, who constitute a moral force that interacts with the living: in return for his and other people's offerings, they are benevolently disposed and will not intervene maliciously on earth. In "judging" humanity (that is, Egyptians), he should act justly toward them, but he can also condemn. Non-Egyptians are excluded from this minimal model, as are beings below humanity in the classification.

These exclusions create a dimension of the king's role in which solidarity is restricted and aggression tends to be emphasized. As in many cosmologies, country, ruler, people, and their gods and deceased are identified with the ordered cosmos (see e.g., Schele and Miller 1986). Aggression is directed outside; in its less metaphorical aspects it keeps foreign enemies at bay, or in expansionist periods it incorporates new territory. Dissent within society and in relation to the king is not a subject that is shown in public, and presentation of his role in this world focuses on foreign relations or on his constructive works. He acts aggressively and destructively toward the forces of disorder, which he casts outside the ordered realm, while his constructive actions utilize the service of humanity, but are oriented toward the gods, in whose service and dependence he stands. Gods, king, humanity, and in a sense the dead, together struggle to maintain the cosmos against a disorder that threatens all of them; the gods are mortal, but the ultimate forces of disorder stand outside space and time and might be termed immortal (Hornung 1982a, 172-85). The king's role in this fragile, threatened cosmos has a high seriousness, and is summarized in the text just cited, which states that he is there "for ever and ever, setting order (*mꜣꜥt*) in place of disorder (*izft*)." Because of his cosmic responsibilities, his actions are not limited by conventional morality (as is true of legitimations for warlike

activity in many or most societies). Although the king is shown as beneficent to humanity, his power and position outside humanity render him ambivalent. Like a god, he can be capricious and dangerous. His touch, look and anger are feared. Here, the multiple interpretations and explanations of polytheistic belief systems are visible. Misfortune may be attributed to the disordered world beyond the cosmos, to sources of disorder among the gods, to insufficiently honored reciprocities between king and gods or king and humanity, and to many other agencies.

It is possible to interpret much of the king's standing in society and cosmos in terms of the concept of the fundamental Egyptian concept of *maat* "order," which is used in the text just cited. The idea of *maat* encompasses both the harmonious cooperation which was projected as a social ideal and the constant struggle to maintain the cosmos against the forces which threatened it. This conceptual breadth contributes to the integration of notions of rule and of the proper order of society by extending the king's freedom of action and avoiding limits on its arbitrary exercise. Counter-currents to such liberty can be also found, and the embedding of the kingship in ritual and custom will have worked against it, but the king's dangerous character and potential for arbitrary action are both a legitimation of his position and an acknowledgment and incorporation of the uncertainty inherent in the unstable cosmos. Thus, I see the positive aspects of *maat* and its emphasis on social solidarity as complemented in practice by more complex notions that relativize the idealism inherent in it. In a sense, this complementarity is summarized in the scene in which the king offers *maat* to a deity, which forms a kind of culmination of offering scenes in temples. In considering how to evaluate the idealistic aspects of *maat*, it must be borne in mind that they are, in the written materials available to us, a literary construct of and for the elite whose implementation in reality remains largely unknown. (See further Assmann 1984c, 1990; Bibliographical Note and Comment at the end of this chapter.)

The king's religious role rendered his exclusive position still more crucial. A result of the convention of decorum—and perhaps of real action to the extent that human access to temples was restricted—according to which people could not interact with the gods, was that he was depicted as the only performer of the cult. The gods emerged before kingship, but this convention made the access of others to them dependent on the king. At the

beginning of Egyptian history the king appears to have arrogated the gods to himself and removed them from people (this historical reading is widespread; architectural corollary: Baines 1991a; for different interpretations, see Morenz 1973b, 16-19; Hornung 1982a, 100-07). In reality, priests performed the cult, so that this presentation might be no more than a convention, but access to temples was restricted to priests, and public participation in rituals for the principal gods was largely confined to festivals. In no period was the function of temples principally to cater to the piety or concerns of the individual. The majority of royal actions recorded for the first few dynasties were directed toward the gods: construction of temples, manufacture of cult images, performance of rituals (Schäfer 1902; Redford 1986aa, 86-90)—activities that left little trace in the archaeological record. Parallel to them ran a few military campaigns abroad and a biennial progress through the country that was presented as a "following of Horus"—a service to the god as manifested in the king; the same term described both the paraphernalia of standards and emblems accompanying the progress and the personnel surrounding the king (Kaiser 1959). No doubt he acted for humanity during these progresses, for example by arbitrating in disputes, but this aspect is not visible in texts and representations. There may have existed a conception, as there certainly did later, that campaigns would be initiated or sanctioned by the gods and the fruits of success presented to them, so that historical and political actions were integrated into the meaning of the cult as actions on behalf of the gods that were performed in the outside world.

Other "records" of campaigns are iconographic motifs, which are the only widespread early representations of the king, showing him defeating his enemies and trampling or clubbing them ritually to death. These are first attested from predynastic times (Williams and Logan 1987). They sometimes appear to preserve accounts of specific events, but in all known cases the details may be conventional. Whether any particular example is the earliest of a genre and records authentic information is almost irrelevant to the meaning of the genre or of the example; because so minute a proportion of the records produced in antiquity is preserved, the chances of our having any "first" objects are very slight. For the presentation of the king's role, the use these scenes make of an ancient legitimizing form and their focus on aggression are significant, and these emphases continue in later sources. In elaborate

examples (e.g., Borchardt *et al.* 1913, pls. 1-8; Jéquier 1936-40, vol. 2, pls. 8-11, 36-43; vol. 3, pls. 12-18, 30-37), this feature is part of the symbolism of temple structures, which are sanctified microcosms: royal aggression is a ritual action dedicated to the gods and serving to defend the microcosm against encroaching disorder.

Just as disorder and order can interpenetrate, so enemies are suppressed internally as well as externally. The possibility of rebellion is, however, hardly made public. Internal and external suppression are linked on figurines that were symbolically destroyed in a ritual of "execration" and inscribed with a formula listing all possible categories of enemy "who will rebel" against the king (Osing 1976, 153-54; Posener 1987, 42-44). Conspiracy against the king was an archetypal offense against order which those who aspired to survive in the next world had to deny having committed, and it is referred to in the same terms as blasphemy (Faulkner 1969, 156 § 892 [paradoxically a text adopted for kings]; T.G. Allen 1974, 98-99). Such things were not unthinkable, but the allusions do not make clear whether conspiracy against a king or against kingship was denied. Kings had an interest in blurring this distinction, for the kingship had little to fear from rebellions against individual kings, but individual kings might reasonably fear rebellion.

The legitimation of kingship through the gods has another aspect in myths of the rule of the gods on earth (on the dating of such myths, see Baines 1991c). Early allusions to a perfect "antiquity" are probably connected with the rule of the gods on earth (Luft 1976; Baines 1989a, 134-35). The principal ruling god was the sun-god Re. Conflict among the gods and the disturbances people caused made him begin to destroy all of humanity and then withdraw into his domain of the sky (a conception attested in texts from the Middle Kingdom and later: Lichtheim 1976, 197-99; Hornung 1982b; Borghouts 1978, 51-55). The rule of the gods was imperfect—perfection is in a sense alien to a polytheistic system—but human imperfection led to a further distancing from the ideal. This myth has two contrasting implications: it both accounts for the imperfection of this world (compare Hornung 1982b: "an etiology of imperfection") and sets the king in an unassailable position as the heir to the sun-god—or, in versions preserved in king lists, to dynasties of gods and spirits (*3ḫw*—who are also the dead, the third category of being mentioned above; Redford 1986a, 11-13). The king's title as "Son of Re" therefore has a whole range of reference that could be evoked as desired.

This "royalist" and centralist view of the king cannot have been the only one that existed in the Old Kingdom. The king's relations with the gods could be problematic because of his dependence on them, and they, who created the world and partook of it, might sustain and care for it more broadly than through his sole person. This possibility is confirmed by proper names from all periods and all accessible levels of society, which display human relations with, and dependence on, the gods; although conventional, this material should be taken seriously (Baines 1991b, 176-78). In addition, a more expansive conception of divine provision for the cosmos can be found from the mid-third millennium on. In this view, people depend directly upon the gods. They—in particular, no doubt, the elite who have access to temples—may consult the gods and call on them for help. The creator god is responsible not just for the four principal categories of the cosmos, but for all living beings. The chief early source for this view is a Fifth Dynasty solar temple that seems to praise the sun-god by displaying the wealth of natural, and principally animal, forms which he sustains (*c.* 2400 BC; Edel 1961-64; Edel and Wenig 1974). The same conceptions can be seen in a list incorporated in a Coffin Text of the Middle Kingdom (discussed by Assmann, 1984a, 209-15) and in New Kingdom solar hymns (Hornung 1982a, 197-203; and see ahead).

The morality of nonroyal display texts of the late Old Kingdom, which are earlier than any comparable royal texts, includes provision for the unfortunate that has no explicitly theocentric formulation, except in terms of destiny in the next life, but fits well with the beliefs just sketched (Assmann, 1990, 106, sees this as relating to the king, the "Great God," but I prefer to understand that term as relating to a deity). In the succeeding First Intermediate Period, the local ruler Ankhtify of Moalla, who described his political and military exploits in immodest terms (Vandier 1950, 162-256; selection Lichtheim 1973, 85-87), presented a coherent nonroyal morality that may refer to direct oracular consultation as legitimation for political action (Fecht 1968, 53-56; Baines 1987a, 88-91). Such moralities would logically have drawn on the expansive view of the gods, although late Old Kingdom notables recounted their activities as priests in their biographies. Ankhtify's ideology was formulated without seeming difficulty soon after the collapse of centralized rule at the end of the Old Kingdom. His legitimations cannot have been very difficult to

devise, and they retained the fundamental element of assuming that there is a single holder of power—in this case a small-scale, local power. Yet although in later periods kingship was perhaps never again as dominant as it had been in the central Old Kingdom, it was not rejected as the indispensable organizing and legitimizing ideology. Instead, the assumption that kingship was indivisible became less automatic, making the institution more flexible.

It is impossible to gauge the relative importance of the narrow, kingly view and the broader one that looked to "natural morality" and directly to the gods (Baines 1991b, 124-30, 137-46), but the tension between self-presentation through actions relating to the king on the one hand, and through individual exploits and moral stature on the other, is visible in nonroyal biographies of the Old Kingdom (Roccati 1982). The king is said to show concern for all his entourage (Kaplony 1968, 50-51). In the preserved material, which derives from the elite, he does not exhibit a more universal concern for humanity, but he probably claimed that too. If he did, there would, in theory, be moral competition both between the king and the more dispersed gods, and among human society between the king and other members of the elite.

To us there may seem to be no necessary connection between legitimation in terms of natural morality—which is in the broadest sense what the *maat* of wisdom texts offers—and of relations with the gods. The looseness of association of these two strategies probably helped nonroyal people to formulate their own moralities (see ahead); but the whole thrust of religious thought and state organization and tradition kept the two strands intimately linked and tended to obscure this point. Thus, a general social secularization was hardly an option and can be largely ignored in studying the development of the king's role. There was discourse about kingship and its legitimation and discourse about the gods, and the two competed while remaining linked; until the first millennium BC there was no significant royal legitimation in terms that did not relate to religion or lessened its significance.

Before reviewing different discourses about kingship and its slow marginalization, the relation between kingship, violence, and succession should be considered. Rules of succession, which are not well understood, are not in themselves significant here. What is relevant is that violent transition was not the norm, so that a

disputed or violent succession, of which there were evidently many, created a need for legitimation.

Texts are seldom explicit about changes of ruler or dynasty. Most of the thirty dynasties of the Graeco-Egyptian historian Manetho (Waddell 1940) correspond to identifiable historical breaks, and there were numerous irregular successions within as well as between dynasties. In the Second Dynasty these tensions were expressed through allusions to the gods and through myth (outline: Edwards 1971, 29-35; see also chapter 3 §3.3). The Horus name of the first king, Hotepsekhemwy, means "The One Who is at Peace in respect of the Two Powers"—Horus and his perpetual antagonist Seth. Later in the dynasty Peribsen, whose name also refers to Horus and Seth, took the title Seth instead of Horus, while his probable contemporary Khasekhem "The One Who Arises in respect of the Power," seems to have defeated Peribsen and changed his name to Horus-and-Seth Khasekhemwy "The One Who Arises in respect of the Two Powers," sometimes expanded with "The Two Lords are at peace in him" (cf. te Velde 1967, 71-73). These devices exhibit conflict explicitly and legitimize it by referring it outside human society: the reconciling king manifests afresh the peace and order in which the gods are both present and content. Other early changes of dynasty or probable disputed successions show no such clear public evidence for struggles over the kingship. The Fourth Dynasty, the period of the great pyramids, included three very short reigns and the violent destruction of the pyramid complex of its third king, Redjedef (e.g., Smith 1971, 173). The only salient feature of the record that may reflect associated conflicts, which surely occurred, is the geographical dispersal of the pyramid complexes. While this crude indicator gives a sense of which kings wished to show that they belonged together, it does not explicate the ideological aspects of conflict, some of which are generally assumed to have been articulated through solar religion.

At the start of the Fifth Dynasty, a more literal legitimation than that of the Second Dynasty seems to have been formulated in terms of the king's Son of Re title. A later literary text presents what must be a tradition going back to the Fifth Dynasty, according to which its first three kings were sons of Re by a human mother (Lichtheim 1973, 219-22). Siegfried Morenz (1975, 83-94) claimed that this tradition mobilized the existing royal "Son of Re" title to adjust the king's position in relation to the dominant deity,

and thus diminished the king's status. This view may, however, take the implications of earlier titles rather too literally (see also chapter 3). The king's dependence on the gods went at least as far back as late predynastic times, and any such diminution is quite uncertain. New Kingdom relief cycles presented the same conception as the literary text by showing the king as begotten by the principal god, Amun-Re, who took on the form of the predecessor to have intercourse with a royal wife (Brunner 1964; Assmann 1982). These cycles are often said to be legitimizing propaganda for particular rulers, but the mythical conception underlying the reliefs was probably valid for any king and the preservation of a record for particular ones may be a matter of chance. In the Late Period, the same material was transformed to create local cycles of the birth of gods from goddesses, appropriating its symbolism to the pantheon.

No royal name, text or representation from earlier periods states explicitly, or even implies strongly, that a king deposed his predecessor; legitimacy and continuity could not be separated. In several periods, notably the Thirteenth–Seventeenth dynasties, kings succeeded one another at great speed, but idioms and legitimations of kingship seem not to have been affected by this instability. Very ephemeral rulers evoked the grandest associations (e.g., Baines 1974). Almost the only public acknowledgment of instability was the occasional use of the title "God's Father" for nonroyal fathers of kings and for the nonroyal ancestor of the Eleventh Dynasty (Habachi 1977a).

Another mode of legitimation that could be related to instability and a loss of status for the king appears in a nonroyal context in the inscriptions of Ankhtify. The first political act Ankhtify recounted was his intervention in Edfu, which he stated to have been ruled by the "House (*pr*) of Khuu," evidently a line of local potentates (Lichtheim 1973, 85-86). In contrast with the mainly divine context in which kings presented themselves, this usage looks to a human founder rather than a kingly predecessor and can allow for competing genealogies of founders. Khuu was presumably the ancestor whose successors used him as a point of reference. The same usage of appealing to a "house" or its founder is known from the Theban Eleventh Dynasty (e.g., Habachi 1963, 44-50) and from the *Instruction for Merikare* (see ahead), which purports to depict the Ninth/Tenth Dynasty (contemporary with the Eleventh Dynasty: Lichtheim 1973, 105, 107). Later "dynastic" usages and periodizations employed essentially similar "historical" legitimations (cf. Baines 1989a).

Middle Kingdom Discussions of the Role of Kings and Their Opponents

In the Twelfth Dynasty (*c.* 1991-1783 BC), literary texts focusing on kingship were composed probably for the first time, and royal inscriptions analogous with private biographies appeared. These texts present complex images of the king's role, allowing for dissent, disputed succession, and questions of motivation, responsibility, and policy (excellent presentation of phraseology: Blumenthal 1970). These issues were not novel, and the way in which they appear in texts probably had more to do with the evolution of writing and literary genres than with changes in ideas. Such developments can, however, have a self-sustaining character and may be difficult to control. The texts have been treated in terms of political propaganda (especially Posener 1956), but that approach neglects their literary complexity. Political persuasion is probably only one facet of them, and not necessarily the most important.

Some works with nonroyal protagonists or fictional authors, such as the *Story of Sinuhe* (Lichtheim 1973, 222-35) and the *Loyalist Instruction* (Posener 1976), exalt kingship strongly; and a cycle of hymns to the king is preserved as a work of literature (Lichtheim 1973, 198-201; Derchain 1987). The texts with the most critical content have imputed royal authors—principally the *Instruction for Merikare* (ascribed to a Ninth/Tenth Dynasty king but probably composed in the Middle Kingdom) and the *Instruction of Amenemhat*. Kings are presented irreverently or negatively in texts that are given the appearance of folk stories (Posener 1960, 89-103); these include a hostile view of Khufu, the owner of the Great Pyramid (Lichtheim 1973, 215-22), and a story about a corrupt late Old Kingdom king who has a love affair with a military officer (Posener 1957; analogous Late Period treatment of a king: Posener 1985). These stories show, unsurprisingly, that people knew of potential or actual failings of rulers, but whether they constitute serious criticism of kingship is uncertain. In some sense most or all Egyptian literature was "serious." However, works composed many centuries after the time of their protagonists probably say nothing authentic about the characters themselves, but rather relate to concerns of the time when they were written, or simply to a folk

tradition or construction; in the case of Khufu, the same opinion is known also from Herodotus. Sneferu, the first king of the Fourth Dynasty, was treated favorably in the literature (e.g., Lichtheim 1973, 60), but his good reputation might derive from his not having built the Great Pyramid rather than from what he himself did. (Erhart Graefe suggests, 1990, that his reputation was due to the meaning of his name, which contained the root *nfr* "good.")

There is a comparable distinction among nonroyal and royal public inscriptions, which are nearly as literary as literature narrowly defined. The most varied image is in royal texts of Senwosret I (*c.* 1971-1926 BC) and III (*c.* 1878-1841? BC; Lichtheim 1973, 115-18, 118-20), which present royal aggression against outside forces, divine descent and relation with the gods, and the dedication of the fruits of campaigns to them (Farag 1980; see briefly Redford 1992, 78-81). In addition, the occasions for rebuilding temples, because of destruction by rebels (Helck 1985; Barbotin and Clère 1991), or through inspiration in a dream (Helck 1978), link the themes of dependence on the gods, the defense and maintenance of order, and the dedication of success to the gods (nonroyal parallel Habachi 1985, 36-37; Franke 1991). This diversity of topics and the admission of internal conflict disappear almost completely from later royal inscriptions.

Among the royal instructions, that for Merikare may not have been written to the prescription of a particular king, but its themes must have been acceptable to royalty (Lichtheim 1973, 97-109; see Baines 1989a, 137-38). The text has a complex, not necessarily unitary presentation of the king's role, moving from the pragmatic need to respect powerful factions and avoid executing people who lead them, through discussions of particular aspects of policy and of responsibility and accountability up till the point of judgment after death, to praise of the creator, who made and cares for people, including the weak (cf. Assmann 1984a, 201-04). The office is burdensome and solitary, and has more community with its other holders than with normal kin. The often harsh tone is legitimized by the king's assumption of responsibility and by the praise of the creator, both of which place the king within a global context in which more than human life on earth is at stake and the present order of things is reaffirmed as ultimately good and sustainable. The text seeks to integrate the expansive moral view of the cosmos with a strong statement of the need for kingly

authority. In this way, it reclaims moral ground which the expansive view tended to assign to the gods and to humanity in general, perhaps including the elites of the First Intermediate Period, rather than specifically to the king. The presentation of the king's humanity and acceptance of judgment after death, which could have been evaded by recourse to a separate otherworldly destiny for him, may be a necessary concomitant of this integration of values; it may also register a change in belief, in which the king's seemingly quite separate Old Kingdom destiny was abandoned (for some components, see Krauss 1992).

In its discussion, the *Instruction for Merikare* rehearses politically significant issues on an ethical plane. The Twelfth Dynasty kings confronted entrenched elites whose aspirations were expressed in terms of care for their dependents, local lineage, and their own exploits (selection of texts: Lichtheim 1973). The king of the Instruction obeys the same moral precepts as these elites, but has a cosmic role and legitimation that they lack. Otto (1969, 386-87) remarked that the text's argumentation pointed logically toward a secular and rational legitimation of kingship. This view is valid in part, but neglects the cosmic overtones which set the king's position off against those of members of the elite. His further comment, that later developments constituted a step back from this position and that this is one of the enigmas of Egyptian history, is rather occidental and implicitly assumes a universal, unidirectional development toward the secular (e.g., Berger 1973). I argue, rather, that competing discourses and agencies which challenge sacral aspects of kingship need not be secular. Ancient Egypt is one of many instances of such competition.

The *Instruction of Amenemhat* (Lichtheim 1973, 135-39) is narrower in focus than the *Instruction for Merikare.* The deceased Amenemhat I (*c.* 1991-1962 BC), the founder of the Twelfth Dynasty, who succumbed to or possibly survived an assassination attempt (the text is deliberately vague), addresses his successor. Amenemhat seems to have introduced the institution of the coregency, in which a new king was installed in office toward the end of his predecessor's reign. Coregency is not mentioned in the Instruction and was never integrated into official royal ideology, but the argument of the text is probably in part a justification of the new practice, stating in a less central context what could not be said in royal display or in a royal inscription.

For later times, the Middle Kingdom was the "classical" period of literature and history. The manuscripts of these instructions are many centuries later than their date of composition, and they were still being copied in the Late Period (Burkard 1977, 6-8). The archetypal hero of the Egyptian history of the Greek Herodotus (ii.102-11) was "Sesostris," a name derived principally from the Egyptian Senwosret, perhaps a conflation of Senwosrets I and III. The latter king consolidated Egyptian rule in Lower Nubia, where he was deified, and set up copies there of an inscription presenting himself as a model of kingship (Eyre 1990). The exploits of Amenemhat III (*c.* 1844-1797 BC), who reclaimed land in the lakeside oasis of the Fayyum, were recalled, together with his first cartouche name Nimuaria (*ny-mꜣʿt-rʿw*), in the "Lamares" of Herodotus. These kings had themselves depicted in statuary in a unique style, with careworn faces whose obvious analogy is in the instruction texts (Evers 1929; Aldred 1971; Simpson 1982b; Tefnin 1992; Baines 1994: 80-83). This sculpture was placed in temples, offering its somber vision to the gods, but its character is meaningful chiefly for a human audience; the same style was used for colossal statues placed outside temples (Romano 1979, no. 40). Thus, the king fulfilled his royal rôle in his martial or constructional exploits, but also made public the responsibility weighing on him. This style did not recur in later times, and its display of the burdens of office has few parallels in royal materials, even though the Middle Kingdom instruction texts continued to be copied.

The New Kingdom Crisis and Erosion of Centralized Kingship (c. 1550-1070 BC)

After partial foreign domination in the Second Intermediate Period (*c.* 1650-1550 BC), Egypt was reunited by the Theban Eighteenth Dynasty, which extended the boundaries of the state into Sudan and Western Asia. The maintenance of this "empire" involved a larger, more permanent and more separately organized military establishment than there had been before. Much of the wealth gained from conquest was donated to the gods in gratitude for success—a success which it was asserted the gods had granted in the first place. The resultant temple buildings and estates came very gradually to form the most significant economic force in the country.

The king displayed his dependence on the gods. Before campaigning, he would consult the god—normally Amun-Re—and receive an oracular command to go out and defeat the enemy. The god subsequently eulogized the king's successes (e.g., Lichtheim 1976, 35-38; 46-47). Such beliefs and practices may well have existed earlier, but if so, they did not have the same institutional consequences as in the New Kingdom. In parallel with the new military, a newly professional priesthood appeared. The three institutional spheres of the traditional bureaucracy, the military, and the priesthood were not separate and many careers encompassed more than one of them, but the newer institutions nonetheless came to diminish the power of the bureaucracy, creating a web of overlapping allegiances. The temples were integrated with the state, so that changes in relative wealth may have been almost imperceptible. By the end of the New Kingdom, however, the temples came to be almost separable from the state organization and to rival it in wealth and power.

Eighteenth Dynasty nonroyal biographies approximately parallel royal texts in their range of subject matter, and thus tend also to support the increased prominence of the temples. Early examples continue to narrate military exploits in relation to the king (cf. Baines 1986, 44-50). The texts present episodes conducive to the dedicatee's glory, but not continuous or comprehensive narratives. Military biographies contrast with other mortuary inscriptions, which seldom recount important "historical" events, being concerned more with their protagonists' civic role and moral worth in relation to fellow citizens, or with their religious actions. The other principal subject of royal display, the construction of monuments, was also recorded in nonroyal biographies (e.g., Helck 1961, 269-74, 328-30). Internal political affairs were not a subject for royal or nonroyal texts. This concentration on religion and morality during the period when temples were growing created a new focus of prestige and ideology, whose potential gradually affected the balance between king and temple.

An uncertain factor in this development is "popular" religion. From earlier periods there is hardly any evidence for popular participation in temple cults. In the Eighteenth Dynasty there were both changes in decorum that allowed religious topics to be more

prominently displayed on nonroyal monuments than before and changes in religious practice. Notables set up intermediary statues in the outer parts of temples, through which others could address their requests to the gods. Large quantities of votive offerings presented by a wider range of people than the inner elite have been found around and within some temples (Pinch 1993). These practices, which kings both countenanced and positively promoted, nonetheless ran counter to the official iconography of the king as the intermediary between humanity and the gods. The inscriptions on intermediary statues do not display disloyalty, relying rather on king's favor. Royal permission was needed to set them up and was given only to leading people. Perhaps both they and the king wished to direct and influence people in their access to the gods, while also securing everlasting benefits for themselves. Yet as the position and wealth of temples changed in a development that ultimately escaped royal direction, people's expectations for the roles of temples and their gods in the lives of individuals also changed.

An example of complex royal motivation in relation to legitimacy is given by the stelae of Amenhotep II (*c.* 1427-1401 BC) and Thutmose IV (*c.* 1401-1391 BC) around the Great Sphinx at Giza (texts e.g., Lichtheim 1976, 39-43; Helck 1961, 140-43). Both inscriptions recount their owner's athletic and leisure activities in their youth and immaturity, before they came to the throne. Amenhotep II related this period explicitly to his being selected as successor (and probable coregent). During their outings, they rode their chariots from Memphis to the Sphinx and pyramids, where they rested their horses or themselves near the ancient monuments. Thutmose had a siesta and a dream that inspired him to clear the Sphinx of sand, a surprising statement when there was a well established secondary cult of the Sphinx flourishing in the area. Amenhotep simply acquired the intention to revive the reputations of the ancient monuments and their kings. These activities bring together ideas associated with the king's personal fitness to rule (cf. Hornung 1957), legitimation by reference to great monuments of antiquity—a widespread interest of the time (Helck 1952) and a scale of creation that could hardly be emulated by present kings—and semi-popular religious cults that had emerged around the monuments and evidently flourished with royal participation. While older views that these stelae specifically legitimized the succession of Thutmose IV in particular were surely mistaken, the implications of the monuments are strongly and diversely legitimizing, illustrating how kings who as yet could display few achievements of their own were able to draw on a wealth of other meanings.

Implications of the development of a focus on temples can be seen on the monuments. Royal mortuary provision, which had been the principal form of display in earlier periods, became less significant: the contrast between the massive pyramid complexes of the Old Kingdom and the smaller New Kingdom royal burials in the Theban Valley of the Kings is striking. Some New Kingdom mortuary temples were grandiose in the extreme, but they were not dedicated exclusively to kings. Instead, they were temples dedicated to the gods in which a particular king had a cult. Kings, who had themselves initiated or encouraged this greater prominence of the gods, could respond to it through detailed features of their own monuments and through making themselves more divine.

The most successful campaigning king of the dynasty, Thutmose III (1479-1425 BC), was the focus of a long-lasting assimilation of the king to Amun-Re. His throne name Menkheperre (meaning uncertain; the form early in the reign was Menkheperkare) became a decorative motif on innumerable scarabs made during the next millennium. The use of these scarabs probably outlived the memory of who Menkheperre had been. The scarab beetle was an ancient symbol of the sun-god Re, while Menkheperre was read cryptographically as Amun (Hornung and Staehelin 1976, 174-77; Jaeger 1982, 94); the object and name together related Thutmose and Amun-Re.

The same possibility was exploited in the throne name of Amenhotep III (1391-1353 BC), Nebmaatre (for the reign, see Kozloff and Bryan 1992; Cline and O'Connor forthcoming). Amenhotep III also went farther than earlier kings in self-deification, setting up a cult of himself as a god whom he was depicted worshipping (e.g., Habachi 1969, 48 figure 32). One of his texts describes him as taking on something like the role of the sun-god in his barque (cf. Yoyotte 1959, 25-26), an identification made closer by a new royal epithet "Radiant solar disc" (O'Connor 1980, 1175). Amenhotep III's massive building projects at Memphis and Thebes remodeled the cities as stages for the celebration of kingship (Hayes 1938, 20-24; O'Connor n.d.). Central to the program at Thebes were the king's vast mortuary temple on the

west bank of the Nile and the rebuilding of the Luxor temple, the most enigmatic major religious foundation in the city. There was also a great palace complex at el-Malqata, with nearby temples and temporary structures for celebrating jubilees (O'Connor 1980). The ritual of the Luxor temple may have centered on the cult of the royal ka or "vital force," the most divine aspect of the king's person (Bell 1985a). Major temples were embellished with colossal statues of the king, many of them facing away from the structures and toward the outside world (Wildung 1973a, 551-54). These displayed his intermediary role in relation to the gods more grandly than nonroyal statues could announce the roles of their owners. They were also named with royal epithets which turned them into quasi-divine beings that could receive devotion on their own account.

In these constructions and activities Amenhotep III presented himself as loyal to Amun-Re. There is a tension between the development of his position and of those of the gods, and part of his intention may have been to balance the colossal monuments built for them with his own temple and with his dominating presence in the temples to the cult of the gods. The possibility that a king might construct an enormous funerary monument exclusively for himself, as had been done in the Old Kingdom, no longer existed, but Amenhotep's mortuary temple went as far as it could toward such monumentality (Kozloff and Bryan 1992, 90-93).

The same kind of tension between divine and royal and between different modes of access to the divine can be seen in more narrowly religious developments. The Cairo Hymn to Amun, some of which may date as early as the Middle Kingdom, is a key text for the Eighteenth Dynasty (Assmann 1975, 199-207; 1983a, 170-82; Barucq and Daumas 1980, 191-201). The hymn develops the "expansive" view of the creator god, presenting his creation of the world in all its aspects, his provision and care for it, and his kingly role in it—the last of these being the most relevant here. There are parallels for these attributes in early Eighteenth Dynasty offering formulas, but their full significance emerges in radical hymns, first attested from the reign of Amenhotep III, which remove the mythological trappings of the solar cycle, concentrating on the here and now and on the god's provision for all beings (Lichtheim 1976, 86-89; Assmann 1983a, 209-12). There was thus a convergence between a creator god with aspirations to be both royal and immanent, and a king with divine aspirations.

Amenhotep IV/Akhenaten (1353-1335 BC) launched a revolution formulated in terms of this convergence. His god was a purified adaptation of the all-caring solar creator; the Great Hymn to the Aten (the solar disc) from his reign has descriptions of the god that are similar to those in the other radical hymns. The most visible forms of his new dogma were the presentation of his god's name and changes in artistic style. The long and complex name, devised at the beginning of the reign, defined the nature of the jubilating sun-god. This name was then awkwardly enclosed like a king's name in a pair of cartouches, qualified by "giver of life" (e.g., Fecht 1960b, 91-118). Both god and king celebrated jubilees early in the reign (Redford 1984, 122-30). The idea of a god as "king" was ancient (cf. Hornung 1982a, 231-34), but it had seldom led to presentation with specifically royal symbols and iconography.

At first Akhenaten occasionally followed the logic of his god's explicit kingship and replaced part of the traditional, mythological opening of his own titulary with the title of "Chief priest" of the god; kings had never before used such titles (Gauthier 1912, 349, no. XIX; Sandman 1938, 144, line 5, cf. Wenig 1975, 212 with n. 28). For the most part, however, he attempted to raise his own status as king in relation to the god and to humanity. Akhenaten's early reliefs include figures of a chief priest of the cult of himself as king (Smith and Redford 1976, 95-99), something that is unknown for other kings, and the iconography of his sculpture displays his own divinity (e.g., Aldred 1988, pls. 33-35). He also emphasized his sole knowledge of his god, his principal epithet being "the Unique One of Re." This exclusiveness combined with new, and in part deliberately shocking, rules of decorum, according to which the god was represented only in the form of a solar disc with rays terminating in human hands that offered blessings to figures of the king and his family (see e.g., Hornung 1982a, 248). In the houses of elite adherents of the new cult were shrines with stelae showing the king with his family in domestic scenes under the rays of his god. Access to the god was through his unique royal representative on earth, whose queen, Nefertiti, and family provided a virtual replacement for the traditional pantheon surrounding the principal god (on the interpretation of these stelae, see Krauss 1991). Both the pluralism of traditional religion and the growing plurality of access to the gods were restricted. The king was depicted smiting his enemies, as was Nefertiti (Cooney 1965, 82-85; Aldred 1988, pls. 40-41), and he had a

conventional foreign policy, but the deeper associations of championing order against chaos vanished along with solar mythology and the realm of Osiris, the lord of the underworld.

Akhenaten's artistic reforms were the most comprehensive in Egyptian history, extending through aesthetic ideals, subject matter and representational aspects, to reversals of decorum. In texts, Akhenaten made public both his rejection of the traditional gods (Redford 1981) and his alleged political problems, together with those of his predecessor Amenhotep III (Helck 1961, 365-68). His followers said they had been nobodies before being elevated by their king (Assmann 1980a, 9-19). Akhenaten violently destroyed the monuments of those who fell from favor and erased the name of the god Amun everywhere on the monuments, as well as occasionally the word "gods" in the plural. So far as these rejected beings were now inimical or disordered, some of this violence may have had a similar function to the king's traditional performance of his role of countering enemies and reaffirming order (as suggested by John Huddlestun). One of Akhenaten's most prominent epithets stated that he "lived on *maat*" and thus proclaimed his adherence to that central value; but it is not known how this assertion related to older conceptions of order.

Akhenaten's reforms have the character of a revolution—the only one in Egyptian history—but a revolution that was initiated by the central figure of the traditional order. This paradox is displayed in the king's ambivalence toward the wider society: his message was one of sweetness and light, proclaiming an all-caring god, but, like many creeds, its concomitant was intolerance and violence. His centrally driven revolution was articulated in terms of, and aimed in large measure to enhance, the defining institution of society, kingship. The pivotal role of the king as a single being between many gods and the many of humanity was to be replaced by a more problematic one to one—one god to one king—with the many of humanity hardly integrated into the new religion; separate human access to the god was denied.

Under Akhenaten's second or third successor, the child king Tutankhamun (1333-1323 BC), the revolution was abandoned, and with it the unique knowledge of the god or gods claimed by Akhenaten. The restoration inscription composed in Tutankhamun's name does not focus on kingship but states that the gods had been absent from the land because their cults were not being

maintained (Helck 1961, 365-68). Military campaigns abroad had failed and gods did not provide advice (oracles?) or respond to prayers for help. The new king, however, revived cults, commissioning new cult statues, appointing new priests from reputable families, and increasing temple establishments. By implication, foreign campaigns now were or would be successful and so the king's traditional role as restorer of order within and outside the country was reaffirmed.

The narrowly religious reaction to Akhenaten is difficult to interpret because the dates of texts with new systematizations of the gods are uncertain (Zandee 1987, 127; here Hornung, 1982a, 217-37, and Assmann, 1983a, need revision). There was no new attempt to make cult and knowledge of the gods depend narrowly on the king and knowledge hitherto displayed only by kings began to appear in nonroyal sources (see range of sources for the text Assmann 1970; 1983a, 24-25; 1983c, 48-49; for the general context, see Baines 1990b). The idea of the kingship of the gods became widespread, but it was not commonly presented through the royal symbol of the cartouche. Amun-Re acquired as a constant epithet "King of the Gods (*nswt-nṯrw*)" which later fused with his name into the Greek word Amonrasonter. The growing economic, and ultimately political, power of the temples favored such an institutional analogy for the god's power. However, in slowly asserting its independence, the priesthood began by staying within its own context and used the kingship of the gods as an expression of praise and a metaphor, not as a pretext for action. In succeeding centuries this position changed greatly.

The last king of the Eighteenth Dynasty, Horemheb (*c.* 1319-1307 BC), was the chief military commander of the reign of Tutankhamun. Horemheb rejected the memory of Tutankhamun, erasing or annexing his monuments. In a "coronation" inscription which is significant as the earliest preserved royal text which states at length that its subject was of nonroyal origin, he wrote about his accession to the throne in a similar vein to that of Tutankhamun's inscription (Gardiner 1953). The text contains no simple criticism of Horemheb's predecessor, Tutankhamun's successor Ay (1323-1319 BC), who is not mentioned by name. The exposition moves from calling Horemheb the vice-regent of the land to recounting his selection for the kingship by Horus of Hnes, the god of his local town in Middle Egypt, whose "eldest son" he is. This Horus

presented the future king to Amun in the Luxor temple at the Festival of Opet, the most important and probably the most public religious celebration in the religious center of royal legitimacy (the rituals performed within the temple itself would of course have been seen by few). Like Tutankhamun, Horemheb emphasized his restoration of the temples and reestablishment of the priesthood, this time drawing its new members from the elite of the army. The shift from citing people of repute to invoking the army is significant in pointing toward Horemheb's power base and, more generally, in suggesting how the traditional bureaucratic elite was in decline and the power of the newer institutions of army and professional priesthood was growing.

Horemheb's inscription shows a tension between his secular origins and religious legitimation. The legitimation is not expressed in terms either of unalloyed power or of the intrinsic power of the kingship, for the latter is shown to depend on the gods. The king serves the gods by securing their cult and cult personnel. This emphasis on cult performance is a specifically religious strategy. Although priests hardly presented themselves as kings before the Graeco-Roman Period, they themselves and the king stated that they were responsible for the normal performance of the cult. Here, the form of conventional temple iconography, in which the king makes all the offerings, tends to distract from the institutional and social significance of Horemheb's concerns. The text scarcely uses the general mythical legitimation of kings at accession through reestablishing order from chaos. The concentration on restoring the temples discounts martial overtones that a general might favor, and reduces the cosmic scope of the king's role. Although strongly religious in focus, the text is also very pragmatic. It is conceivable that this retreat from the notion of order reflected a failure of foreign policies—which had almost certainly taken place—but it is more likely that the choice of emphasis related to the king's nonroyal background and to the country's principal concern in the period.

In his use of the past, Horemheb exploited the aftermath of Akhenaten's revolution by demolishing his buildings, and interred blocks from them within his own constructions, incorporating in a material form the idea of an enemy within rather than beyond Egypt who was to be combated (such reuse of building material was, however, often neutral in meaning, cf. Björkman 1971, 11-21, 121-22). His annexation of the works of two predecessors presented him as responsible himself for rejecting the revolution. A Nineteenth Dynasty king list followed this lead and omitted Akhenaten and his successors (Redford 1986a, 18-20). An inscription of the reign of Ramses II refers to Akhenaten's reign as that of the "enemy of Akhetaten (his new capital city)," and gives Horemheb at least 59 years of rule, the majority of which were those of the kings who were removed from the record (Gaballa 1977, 25). This treatment of "history," which is not spelled out in discursive texts, mythologizes Akhenaten, associating him with general enemies of order but retaining his position in the succession of events.

The Nineteenth Dynasty (1307-1196 BC) saw the reign of one of Egypt's most famous kings, Ramses II (1290-1224 BC), whose aspirations to divinity and building programs resemble, and were probably intended to surpass, those of Amenhotep III. Ramses portrayed his relations with Amun-Re in a dramatized version of the cycle of affliction and divine mercy found in pious nonroyal texts (Lichtheim 1976, 65-66; von der Way 1984). This vision of royal dependence, which may have had a political dimension (Assmann 1983b) and mobilizes a similar divine–royal relation to that of Horemheb, could be seen either as tempering the ruler's divinity or as giving him a status separate from normal mortals since only the king could claim divine succor on such a plane. Whichever of these two is the case, the text provides a contrast with Ramses' claims to divinity.

Dynastic troubles left Ramses as a model for the next dynasty, in which every king after the first took the dynastic name Ramses (III-XI). Reflecting this subordination of the identity of the later kings, scholars term the Nineteenth–Twentieth dynasties the Ramesside period. This royal model weakened royal links with the gods. Before, the motifs of continuity and of descent from the gods had balanced each other, but now the this-worldly references in royal texts were stronger. Sethnakhte (1196-1194 BC), the first king of the Twentieth Dynasty, recorded his struggle for the country (Drenkhahn 1980). This was also commemorated by Ramses IV (1163-1156 BC) in a text which presents Ramses III (1194-1163 BC) posthumously describing his antecedents and works (Breasted 1906, 198-206; Erichsen 1933). Sethnakhte was vague in his references to predecessors who were enemies but, like Horemheb, he indicated that the conflict was internal while at the same time assimilating it to the old pattern of the defeat of the forces of chaos. The Ramses III/IV version of the narrative is more open,

seemingly—but probably not in fact—identifying the "Syrian" leader of the defeated faction by name (the name, *itr-sw*, probably means "Self-made Man").

Between Horemheb and Ramses IV there was thus no single treatment of opposition and its defeat. Variations in approach may relate to different purposes served by particular texts as much as to different attitudes to kingship and rebellion. Ramses IV erected a stela containing invocations to Osiris and eleven other deities which has been characterized as a "treatise on royalty" (Derchain 1980; Korostovtsev 1947). This text combines many motifs, including legitimacy and royal descent (which are not identical) and a set of ritual denials of wrongdoing similar to those which deceased people were held to pronounce in order to be judged favorably after death, as probably did priests when they were initiated into office (Grieshammer 1974). The denials demonstrate that the king submitted to priestly codes, and their import for the king's status is therefore comparable to Horemheb's historical-priestly presentation of events and decisions. Ramses states in as many words that he was not a usurper, something that was true of few of his immediate predecessors, and this assertion places added weight on the other legitimations in the text. As in other compositions of this date, there is little legitimation in terms of order, force, or foreign conquest, no doubt in part because of political decline. In a period when writing and knowledge were more widely disseminated than in the Third Millennium, the gap between assertion and reality might have been too great to carry conviction. Thus, in part through lack of achievement, the king came to have a moral position and stature all too similar to those of other human beings. In rhetorical terms the text of Ramses IV is novel, being cast in the first person as an act of devotion to the gods. Its general message and allusions to current conditions appear to involve an audience much wider than this form would imply. As often, the public who would hear that message is hard to define.

During the Twentieth Dynasty, the position of the king became progressively weaker and conflict began to center on the high priest of Amun-Re, whose resources rivaled those of the king. The central administration retained some coherence throughout, but one high priest was temporarily removed from office, and under Ramses XI (*c.* 1100-1070 BC) a civil war arose around the persons of the high priest Amenhotep and the viceroy of Nubia (e.g.,

Helck 1968a, 203-05). Amenhotep and his predecessor Ramessesnakhte created unprecedented temple reliefs showing themselves before the gods which were carved on walls in the outer parts of the great temple at Karnak (Lepsius 1972-73, plates 237b-d). Herihor, Amenhotep's successor, who seems to have been a military man who entered the priesthood toward the end of his career, went further. While Ramses XI still reigned in the north, he adopted limited kingly titles and iconography in reliefs in the main cult areas of the temples of Amun-Re and Khonsu (Bonhême 1979). He did not present himself as king elsewhere, and his first cartouche name was "Chief Priest of Amun," which ignored almost all traditional royal legitimation. This radical reduction of kingship was the culmination of the tendency I have traced from the time of Tutankhamun and Horemheb, but it was reached only by a usurper.

Herihor's successor Piyankh did not take the same formal step of assuming the kingship, but continued to use his military titles and waged a campaign against the viceroy of Nubia. A letter he sent to Thebes from Nubia ordering the murder of two policemen continues with the comment, probably in response to his correspondent's worries that the king might find out or attack: "As for Pharaoh, how can he reach this land (Nubia or Thebes?)?—And as for Pharaoh, whose master is he in any case?" (Wente 1967, 53, modified). Such opinions of the king—and, through reference to the office rather than the person, the kingship—are otherwise hardly preserved from antiquity. They could either have been part of the background to ideological change in this period or have been common in many periods.

The slightly later story of Wenamun, which has the form of a report by an emissary sent by Herihor to obtain timber in Lebanon for the barque of the Theban god Amun-Re, ignores Ramses XI entirely. The 21st Dynasty or slightly later manuscript of this text was found at el-Hiba (Gardiner 1932, xi), the frontier town of the domain of Amun-Re which had formed from the Twentieth Dynasty breakdown of central rule, encompassing much of the Nile Valley. One episode of the story narrates how during negotiations, the ruler of Byblos refers to the treatment of earlier envoys of Khaemwese, probably the birth name of Ramses IX (*c.* 1131-1112 BC), who were detained at Byblos until they died. Wenamun replies that the comparison is wrong because Khaemwese's messengers were men, as was Khaemwese himself—a

marked slight for a king—whereas on this occasion Amun-Re King of the Gods has sent his divine messenger, Amun-of-the-Way (a portable statue) and with him Wenamun, his human messenger (Lichtheim 1976, 228). This exchange reads like a fictitious and probably retrospective legitimation of the splitting of the country and marginalization of the king, who has become irrelevant to power and authority. In a welter of endeavor and intrigue, the god alone counts. Twenty-first Dynasty Thebes was ruled by high priests, of whom one or two took the title of king for short periods (Kitchen 1986). But the acknowledged kings at Tanis in the Delta, whose rule was nominally accepted at Thebes, cannot have viewed things on the lines of Wenamun, and the ideology of kingship survived along with them. Priests had only limited success in taking over the position and authority of kings, but the withering of the traditional state centered on the king left them as the guardians of high culture, a role they retained to the end of Egyptian civilization.

The New Kingdom crisis of belief that culminated under Akhenaten attacked central elements in the definition of kingship, cosmos, and culture (see in general Assmann 1983a). Its short term effect was not to diminish the kingship but rather to focus on the restoration and consolidation of the traditional cult of the gods. In the longer term, the emphasis on the kingship of gods, both under Akhenaten and in the aftermath, as well as shifts in royal and divine power, raised the status of the gods in relation to the king on earth, while the plurality of their identities and manifestations in an increasingly divided society provided many possible avenues and modes of access to superhuman power, legitimation, and succor. Models of the primacy and hierarchy of the gods made the supreme deity or deities vastly superior to any this-worldly power (Assmann 1980b), and hence, partly through the use of metaphors of kingship, put the king in second place or lower. So long as the king wielded effective political control and could harness access to the gods, these developments need not have threatened his position, but over several centuries they weakened it markedly.

The First Millennium BC and Roman Period: Dissolution and Reformulation (c. *1070 BC–AD 395*)

These very gradual developments had long term successors in the later evolution of kingship and the state. I present this period extremely briefly.

For 350 years after the end of the Twentieth Dynasty there was seldom a dominant power in Egypt, and from the later Ninth century BC the kingship split progressively until the late Eighth century, when a high priest, perhaps five local rulers bearing the title of king, and numerous princes and other rulers called "Great Chief of the M(eshwesh)," divided the country (Kitchen 1986). The role of the temples and the gods in the affairs of this period is exemplified by an inscription probably from the end of the Twenty-first Dynasty, which shows an oracular decision of Amun-Re to grant a cult of an ethnically Libyan leader called Nimlot to his son, the Great Chief of the M(eshwesh), Shoshenq (Blackman 1941; Edwards 1982, 535-38). This procedure is doubly significant because the king of the day displayed exaggerated satisfaction at the result of the oracle. The Shoshenq is probably the future Shoshenq I (*c.* 945-924 BC), the founder of the 22nd Dynasty, and the king is his predecessor Psusennes II (*c.* 959-945 BC). Thus, oracles, which had confirmed the intentions of well established New Kingdom kings to carry out acts of expansion, were later used to legitimize a potential successor's status before he came to the throne or became the king designate. New Kingdom kings had referred to oracles that had supposedly designated them beforehand for extra legitimation during their reigns, but these accounts are evident fictions. By the Third Intermediate Period, kingship and succession may have been more directly dependent on gods and oracles.

A major force throughout this period was ethnicity (cf. A. Leahy 1985, 1990b; Baines in press a). Many leaders were ethnic Libyans descended from soldiers and prisoners of war settled in Egypt during struggles of the Nineteenth–Twentieth dynasties. The Meshwesh were the most important of these groups. By the end of the Twentieth Dynasty Libyans had penetrated the family of the High Priests of Amun, and one of the kings of the 21st Dynasty bore the Libyan name Osorkon. These people were culturally Egyptian but retained a defining ethnic and military identity. Despite their use of Egyptian symbols and adherence to general

Egyptian values, they seem, unlike traditional Egyptians, not to have had strong centralistic ideals, and this possibly ethnic aspect of their ideology may have contributed to the progressive splintering of kingship and rule.

In 730 BC the most powerful leader north of Thebes was Tefnakhte, the ruler of the ethnic Libyan heartland of the western Delta. During a raid through the country from south to north, the Sudanese 25th Dynasty king Piye (*c.* 750-712 BC), who ruled much of the Nile Valley, forced all the other rulers except Tefnakhte to submit to him (Lichtheim 1980, 66-84), but he did not remove them from office, and indeed depicted a number of them as kings on the triumphal stela recording his campaign (Grimal 1981, plates 1, 5). Piye emphasized that he was a traditional king who observed ritual prescriptions of purity, unlike rulers in Egypt. Purity is not prominent in earlier royal display, although it can be inferred from the text of Ramses IV cited earlier. Making purity into an issue might imply that even an obvious aspect of kingship, which is visible in numerous formulas in which the king instructs those who enter a temple to purify themselves four times, had been neglected by Piye's enemies. He seems thus to have presented them as "secular," in contrast with his proper integration with the world of the gods and the traditional service for them which he provided as a true king of Egypt. The strength of this emphasis could, however, also be an innovation of his time, and would be in keeping with general developments toward exclusivity that can be seen in the succeeding Late Period.

Piye presented his campaign as having been inspired by his god Amun-Re and occasioned by Tefnakhte's southward expansion in the Nile Valley. Perhaps looking back to New Kingdom traditions, Piye prided himself on his care for horses, as against the Egyptians of his time who maltreated them (Grimal 1981, 280-82). He exploited the divine associations of kingship, but contemporary kings, hardly any of whose inscriptions are preserved, may have done the same. Because so many Egyptian leaders displayed a notionally non-Egyptian ethnicity, the Sudanese Piye could claim that he was more Egyptian than they, whether or not native Egyptians accepted this.

In the aftermath of Piye's raid, Tefnakhte consolidated his power and he or his successor Bocchoris (24th Dynasty, *c.* 717-712 BC) took the title of king. Later history created a dynasty running from Tefnakhte to the powerful 26th Dynasty (672-525 BC), but

this may have been a fiction ascribed to ancestors who had not themselves presented their rule in kingly terms. Although Piye's successor Shabaka (*c.* 712-698 BC) attempted to eliminate other kings and initiated a cultural revival throughout the Nile Valley, the Assyrian conquerors of Egypt in 672-664 BC found a political map that was little changed from the Eighth century. They applied the Akkadian term for "king" to many people, cutting across Egyptian categories (Oppenheim, in Pritchard 1969, 294-96). In another development that escaped both royal symbolism and long-standing attempts of kings to influence Thebes by dedicating their celibate daughters as "divine adoratrices" and principal personnel of Amun, the Fourth Priest of Amun-Re in Thebes and "Governor of the City" Montuemhat became more important within Upper Egypt than the kings of his time.

This wide variety of "royal" and nonroyal power was broken by Psammetichus I (664-610 BC), who declared himself independent from Assyria and reunited Egypt. Psammetichus constrained the Thebans to accept his daughter as the divine adoratrice's heiress, while ostensibly reaffirming her predecessors in office (Caminos 1964). Elsewhere, he displaced local rulers and attempted to centralize and secularize his rule. For earlier times, one might with qualification term "secular" the power of the elaborately supported, central, and symbolically legitimized kingship, together with its bureaucracy. The long dispersal of power and kingship had weakened the significance and the religious integration of these institutions, and Late Period kingship emerged as relatively secular in a Western sense. Although himself probably of "Libyan" extraction, Psammetichus pursued national unity by suppressing the ethnicity of the elites and by winning over those with military rather than religious authority. As had been true for centuries, the temples were the economically and culturally dominant sector of society, and this relative secularity of kingship existed in an intensely religious context. The other repository of power continued to be the military, among whom were foreign Greek and Carian mercenaries. These people were scarcely integrated into native Egyptian culture, which they did not affect as much as the Libyans had done.

From the Twenty-fifth Dynasty, through the Persian occupations of Egypt (525-404, 343-332 BC) and native rule in the Fourth century (404-343 BC), into Macedonian and Ptolemaic times (332-30 BC), there were frequent changes of dynasty, usurpations, and

campaigns of destruction by rulers against their immediate or more distant predecessors. This pattern of events may not have been very different from that of the Third Intermediate Period (which is less adequately documented in this respect), except that there were not multiple concurrent dynasties in the Late Period. Much of this history is known from foreign sources, and some of the principal earlier periods might appear similar if similar evidence for them were preserved. The contemporary context does, however, seem to show similar patterns in the very few preserved royal inscriptions from the period.

Here, the earliest relevant text is a fragmentary inscription of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty king Taharqa (690-664 BC), in which he acknowledges a wrong that he had committed as king (Spalinger 1978a, 28-33). In the complete text this no doubt formed part of a pattern of guilt, affliction, and "atonement" comparable with Ramses II's use of the model of piety in his Kadesh narrative, but Taharqa went further in admitting guilt and thus in bringing royal self-justification still closer to human patterns. For the Twenty-sixth Dynasty, the crucial figure is Amasis (570-526 BC), a "nationalist"—that is, anti-Greek—usurper who later was conciliatory to Greek mercenaries, on whom he depended for defense against the Near Eastern empires, and perhaps also for internal stability. Amasis overthrew his predecessor Apries (589-570 BC), waging a three-year struggle in which Apries was defeated and killed (Edel 1978a), and then burying him with full royal honors in the royal cemetery at Sais in the Delta. Amasis recounted all these events in an inscription that does not use the name Apries but spells out the struggle clearly. Earlier usurpers may well have buried their predecessors in order to establish their legitimacy, since this was a fundamental Egyptian "filial" duty, but this record in a text of strikingly "objective" tone has no earlier parallel. In keeping with this broadening of official sources, later anecdotal material, in one case formed into a literary text, gives Twenty-sixth Dynasty kings a notably secular image (cf. Spalinger 1978b). The anecdotes, which dwell on Amasis' drinking and his treatment of everyday affairs, may have recalled legitimations disseminated during his time that would have presented the usurper favorably to the Egyptian people, and perhaps especially to the Greeks.

Nectanebo I (380-362 BC), the usurping founder of the Thirtieth Dynasty, took this candor a stage farther in a different context. An inscription commemorating rebuilding in a temple at Hermopolis states that before his accession, when he was a military officer, he visited the place and was shocked at its condition; when he later became king, he undertook to restore it (Roeder 1954, 389). The motif of restoring a structure seen in decay before accession is common in earlier royal inscriptions (e.g., Helck 1961, 140-43) and occurs in the Late Period under Taharqa (Macadam 1949, 14-21), but previous kings who used this device had been the heirs to the throne before their accession. Nectanebo seems to have been concerned here about his legitimation through action for the gods—an appropriately traditional concern—but hardly about how he came to the throne. The casualness of the reference to his earlier position could, however, also be a way of defusing an issue and making his accession appear more natural.

This broadening of royal inscriptions continued into Ptolemaic times (305-30 BC; see in general Bevan 1927). The earliest preserved hieroglyphic inscription of one of the period's rulers is the Satrap Stela of Ptolemy I Soter. This was set up before Ptolemy took the title of king and records, among other matters, the return to Egypt of cult images removed during the second Persian occupation (see Lorton 1971, 162-63). Rulers of earlier periods would probably not have admitted that such statues had ever left the country, and this motif, which is known for all the first four Ptolemies, could be non-Egyptian in origin. Whether the achievements they claimed really occurred and whether, or how many times, the images were really removed, is quite uncertain. Later in the dynasty, "public" decrees were issued and inscribed in hieroglyphic, demotic (cursive Egyptian), and Greek. The decrees of Ptolemy IV Philopator (221-205 BC) and V Epiphanes (205-180 BC) proclaim the results of conciliatory meetings between representatives of royalty—the kings themselves were very young—and the native priesthood (no modern editions: Bevan 1927, 208-14, 232, 262-68). That of Ptolemy IV also celebrated the return of statues from abroad, while the decree for Ptolemy V announced the end of a rebellion and the king's Egyptian-style coronation. These texts represent a compromise between Egyptian and Greek ideas. The later ones specifically addressed the native elite (the latest preserved dates to Augustus, 30 BC-AD 14: Porter and Moss 1939, 253). In the complex, plural culture of Graeco-Roman times, where native tradition was concentrated in temples to which few had direct access, none of these texts can have addressed the native population as a whole; the kings were attempting to win the

people over by working through the elite. How their propaganda to their own immigrant group related to their presentation of themselves to Egyptians is an involved question, which Ludwig Koenen (1983) has studied brilliantly (see also Préaux 1976). One notable feature of the legitimation of the Ptolemies that is not well paralleled earlier is the dominant emphasis in their Greek and Egyptian titularies on descent from predecessors in office. This went together with an elaborate cult of deceased and living members of the royal family that is attested almost exclusively in the dating formulas which form the preambles to administrative documents (Clarysse and van der Veken 1983; Minas 1993). The cult was an essentially Greek institution practiced in Alexandria and Ptolemais, the Greek city which had been founded in Upper Egypt.

Throughout the Late and Ptolemaic periods, the focus of elite Egyptian personal display was in the temples. Its most important form was the inscribed temple statue (Bothmer 1969). Secular power and actions were rarely evoked. The owners of these statues (Otto 1954) presented themselves in their texts as priests devoted to their gods, subsuming action in the outside world within religion. Such a presentation is analogous in important ways with the conventional image of the king as the dutiful servant of the gods, except that the king also predominates in the decoration of temple structures, where the nonroyal were not shown, in part for reasons of decorum. In the early Persian period (*c.* 520 BC), Udjahorresne, who chose to serve the Persian kings, justified that decision by the improvements he was able to bring to the temple of Neith at Sais, the capital of the previous dynasty (Lichtheim 1980, 36-41; Lloyd 1982b). In Macedonian times, two men, one a son of the last native king, Nectanebo II (360-343 BC), justified their exile and, it seems, their joining the service of a foreign ruler, more in psychological terms by attributing their motivation to a god (Clère 1951, 152-54). Here, the presentation of such events in biographical inscriptions (as against works of literature) and the lack of direct reference to the king have no parallel in earlier texts. This emancipation of foreign affairs from royal participation no doubt related in part to the new conditions of foreign rule and to the lack of a native king to whom one could appeal.

The cultural focus of temples was paralleled in architectural activity as early as the Twenty-first Dynasty. From then on, nonroyal

people did not build the massive tombs that had been their central display (Seventh–Sixth century BC Thebes provides a major exception). Kings did not have large separate tombs, but were buried in relatively small structures within temple enclosures, as were some other leading individuals (Stadelmann 1971; nonroyal tombs of this type at Memphis and Heracleopolis: Pérez Die 1990). Proximity to the gods had become the highest expression of special status, while also conferring greater security on tombs than could be achieved in any other way. In Late and Graeco-Roman times there was much temple building throughout the country. A higher proportion of the monuments of antiquity was created then than is now readily apparent, but in the southern Nile Valley, the major Graeco-Roman temples are still dominant, exceeding most predecessors in size and number. This massive outlay parallels the textual persuasion of the elite in the multilingual inscriptions and in whatever wider forms of dissemination they enjoyed, but the temples were more visible and persuasive for much of the population—even though few people entered them. It may be no coincidence that the largest preserved Graeco-Roman temples are in areas that have been backwaters since antiquity but were centers of anti-Ptolemaic feeling at the time.

The rulers who built these structures could not read their inscriptions and could have had little detailed understanding of the role of the king that was portrayed in them, beyond knowing that he articulated human–divine relations, and hence the Egyptian cosmos (which was different from the Ptolemies' own, Hellenistic cosmos). This generalization of the king's functions across cultural and ethnic divides was acceptable in antiquity, when people respected or worshipped other people's gods and believed that the god of a place might have preeminent power locally. Within the native temples, however, the living king or emperor remained an outsider, whose deification in other contexts in Egypt and in his wider domains followed Hellenistic rather than Egyptian models. For the Egyptians, the temples remained a vital and beneficent force in a way in which the kingship had ceased to be centuries earlier. The figure of the king presented in their reliefs continued to be crucial and was elaborated richly over more than five hundred years (Derchain 1962). Yet in subtle ways what was presented in the reliefs behind a façade of continuity shows a marked decline in his status and role, as has

been convincingly shown by Eberhard Otto (1964, 63-83) and Erich Winter (1976; for a rather different view, see Quaegebeur 1988, 1989).

A crucial insight into Egyptian views of kingship in this period is given by the Demotic Chronicle. This literary text purports to be a set of oracular pronouncements about the latest native kings (Johnson 1983; see also Lloyd 1982a), whom it assesses, finding the majority who were usurpers wanting because they did not respect the gods. The ideals of the chronicle are not surprising. The king should be the legitimate successor to the throne and should have a proper coronation. He should protect the country from foreign invasion and nurture its prosperity. His most important duty, however, is to honor the gods and be generous to their temples, and in this way to be a "man of god." In this crucial case the king is referred to not as a god, but as a man. This rather muted view of his status is a suitable conclusion to the fluctuating fortunes of Egyptian kingship and kings; here, the king is clearly subordinated to the higher power of the gods. In comparison, contemporary Hellenistic ideals of kingship gave the ruler a more central position in his rather more plural, and in some senses more secular, state. For native Egypt, kingship and kings became marginal and primarily symbolic during this period when the rulers were culturally alien, even though they were the political masters of Egypt and had their power base in the country itself. The uneasy compromise between the originally all-powerful native king and the dominant settler reflects many of the strains in the Ptolemaic state.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have focused on royal legitimation, particularly on aspects that relate to doubt and dissent; true statements of opposition are almost absent. Legitimation can be studied more easily for periods when continuous texts were written, but it is a feature of most institutions and must have been a factor from the beginning of the kingship. Over millennia, Egyptian society very slowly became rather more plural and less focused on the king. This change was not due to periodic collapses in the kingship, which survived the intermediate periods without significant diminution in its stature and remained so central that the ideological crisis of Akhenaten was articulated in terms of

kingship. That crisis was, however, in some respects the first stage in the erosion of kingship as a central symbol, forming a development with both religious and political dimensions. During periods of weakness of the kingship and in its long final diminution, kings did not reject the divine associations of their offices or persons or discourage divinization, but their claims became more and more focused on temples to the cult of the gods. After the New Kingdom, kings had no temples to their own cult, although they had tombs with chapels in temple complexes and statue cults in temples of the gods (e.g., Otto 1957).

The foreign rulers of the Late and Graeco-Roman periods could not fully exploit local paths to divinity and were not accepted in local esteem as much as the Roman emperor was, for example, in the more "Classical" region of Asia Minor (Price 1984). Egyptian kingship was tenacious in its symbolic and political aspects but, like most kingships, it was specific to a single culture, and the new kings, who came from a civilization that was not coextensive with any one state, stood on the edge of it. The king of the native monuments ultimately became an almost entirely symbolic or theoretical figure who was explicated by the small priestly elite but was not the ideological or religious focus for the rest of the native population. Texts emanating from a temple environment but disseminated a little more widely propounded explicitly the ancient view that order was fragile and had to be maintained by the cult of the gods (Vandier 1961, 129-31; see Fowden 1986, 13-44). Whereas this had earlier been a royal duty, now it was formulated in relation to the temples and without specific reference to the king.

In terms of power, however, the king retained his position: some of the Ptolemies were among the most dominant central rulers of Egypt of any period, but they assimilated themselves to the local culture only to a limited extent. The temples could not dispense with the symbolic role of the king and his economic power as patron of their buildings and endowment, while for the ruler and the elite they had become more potent repositories of native culture and of social solidarity than the kingship. Thus, kingship was marginalized both by the foreignness of the rulers and by internal religious developments. During some earlier periods, ideologies that centered less on kingship and more on the roles of local grandees had acquired some prominence, but such tendencies were never important when the country was

centralized. In the highly centralized Graeco-Roman period, kingship remained the centripetal definition of native Egyptian civilization, but was nonetheless reduced to a definition rather than a living focus, and became centered on the temple, in contrast with earlier times, when the temples had to a great extent depended on king and state. The foreign rulers were well aware of this weakened prestige but did not neglect the native office of king. The Roman prefect, an appointed official who served for a limited period and governed the country in the name of the emperor, was invested with some of the aura of kingship. He performed rites for the inundation which kings had earlier performed (cf. Bonneau 1964, 331-32, 448), and he was forbidden to travel by boat on the Nile during the inundation, a prohibition that has no apparent basis in Graeco-Roman times and may preserve a dynastic royal tradition (for discussion, see Bonneau 1961). It is difficult to say how far these practices went toward legitimizing Roman rule in Egypt and the emperor's almost complete absence from the country.

Developments in Egyptian kingship and its legitimation relate to change at a societal level, where significant patterns can be identified. Texts that provide evidence for these changes, however, derive almost as much of their meaning from the literary genre and from relations to the discourse of one another as from any unmediated response to social life—if there can be such a response. Studies of kingship and society become studies of works of literature and art, produced by the small elite that mostly focused around the kings, or in later periods, the temples. These legitimations hardly spoke to the wider society in the way in which the great works of architecture of various periods must have done.

Attitudes to kingship are enmeshed in the interdependence of successive texts and cannot be approached directly. This perspective of the material as forming a tradition allows interpretations of long-term changes, such as the "secularized" image of Late Period kings, that might not seem so significant for the short term, and could even not appear as innovations to the actors. Yet this perspective has elements in common with that of the Egyptians, in that they had the monuments and texts of the past before them and so constructed their present in relation to a past that was more immediate than any counterpart can be in Western society. The detailed implications for kingship of this use of the past, which included distinctions among earlier periods, have yet to be

worked out for the Late Period, during which "archaism" was a salient phenomenon (Brunner's reading, 1970, is implausible; see further L. M. Leahy 1988, chapter 6). One detailed example of this evocation is the form of Twenty-sixth Dynasty royal inscriptions, such as that of Amasis recording his war with Apries. A number of these are written in vertical columns, recalling the format of Old and Middle Kingdom texts (even in the Middle Kingdom this was disappearing). This form contrasts with the content and may help to legitimize it.

Despite the recalcitrance of the sources, ritual and other forms of legitimation are vital avenues of approach to the reality of Egyptian kingship. Ritual, which I have not studied in this chapter, addresses continuity while supporting and constraining the king's role in his performance of his office; other forms of legitimation address more generally the problematics of rulership, power, and inequality. Because no discursive history or description from outside the ruling elite is preserved, rather little is known from Egypt of the anecdotal details of intrigue and assassination which are familiar from the Classical world and many other societies, but there is every reason for assuming that such events occurred. These events, and the orderly successions, achievements and conquests of rulers who did not suffer them, formed the background, chiefly among the elite, to the largely monumental and literary discourse I have examined. Legitimation is a crucial factor in the interrelations of all these historical and social currents.

Bibliographical Note and Comment

This chapter treats its subject very selectively, hardly considering, for example, modes of legitimation in terms of the past or of the king's own person and relations with his entourage.

Among previous studies, only Otto (1969) has a similar focus. I document specific points, but not normally current interpretations (Hornung 1982a, 135-42, gives an excellent summary). For texts I mostly refer to published translations; the originals can be found from there. Both the present volume and Bonhême and Forgeau (1988) have large bibliographies. Dates are those of this volume as a whole (alternative scheme: Krauss 1985).

Jan Assmann's major work *Maʿat: Gerechtigkeit und Unsterblichkeit im Alten Ägypten* (1990) appeared after this chapter was first

completed. Since his book covers in depth areas related to those I review, a couple of sentences of comment may be useful; it is not practicable to offer an extended critique or to refer to it throughout much of my text. Assmann's work is focused around the concept of *maat* "order," but in presenting Egyptian ethics and social solidarity he also ranges very broadly through material in which the word itself does not occur. He discusses legitimation specifically in his chapter VII. The result is a remarkable tour de force and a compelling synthesis. In relation to my present topic, however, I see three difficulties in its approach. First, it does not take into account sufficiently the contrast between the inclusiveness of ethical statements—which I would see as a legitimation—and the extremely small audiences to which the texts were addressed. As a result, the social vision he presents is more filled with harmony than the material may warrant. Second, Assmann makes little allowance for possible variation in beliefs, for the likely size of the gaps in preserved evidence, and for sectors in society whose beliefs and orientations are unknown. Together, these two points mean that he presents the perspective of the elite actors on legitimation rather more than an observer's perspective of the kind attempted in this chapter. Third, Assmann's traditionalist image of the Old Kingdom as an integrated age followed by an intellectual crisis in the First Intermediate Period may take too long-term a perspective and, I believe, does not do full justice to possible and indeed attested complexities in Old Kingdom ideas.

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