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Note on Pyramid Text, Utterance 558

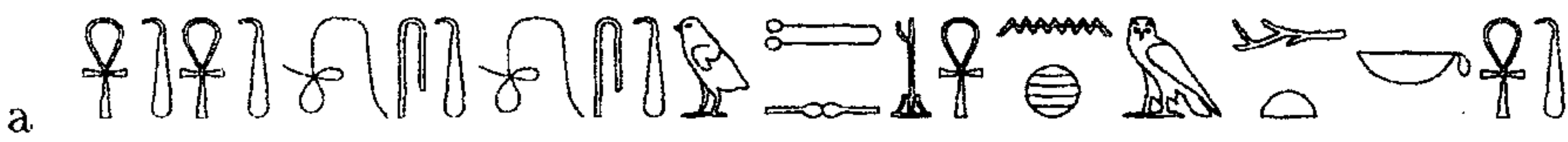
Pyramid Texts, the title given by Egyptologists to the collection of religious texts that had been copied on the walls of pyramids since the region of Wenis, the last king of the fifth dynasty, were composed for the benefit of the king and were uttered during royal funeral ceremonies. Later on these compositions also served nobles as proven by the copies of it on the walls of their tombs and papyri.

Among these religious texts there is an address to the dead king, the utterance 558 (1390a-d-1391a), which reads as follows

1390



1391



1390

- a *dd mdw i; M p(n) ind hr.k hh*
b *sš;;.n.k sš;;(t)¹km wr*

¹ This verb transliterated *sš;;* and *sh;*, cf. Wb IV,268,3 according to James P. Allen (*The*

c *hn.n.k hnt ntr*²

d *id.n.k idt. k;i smk m iwnw*

1391

a *nh.ti nh.ti w;s.ti wts nh m nht.k nh.ti*

1390

- a Recite. O you M. Hail to you, (o) Heh³.
- b You travelled⁴ indeed, (o) Great Black.
- c You stopped indeed, (o) god.
- d You burn incense indeed, (o) Long Lock, in Junu.

1391


- a May you live, may you live. Be happy, be happy. Raise up. Live on your strength.
May you live.

This short composition being an utterance, as the rubrum *dd mdw* points out, opens an address to the dead king and a greeting to him. From the grammatical point of view it is a vocative and short verbal sentence with an epithet of the dead king at the end of it. Short verbal sentences have also built the theme of the whole composition which has been closed by phrases in the Old Perfective. This last grammatical form is of exclamatory use.

Regarding the predicates of verbal sentences it is SDM.N.F active form. They are followed by the same verbs from the semantic point of view. According to the flexional ending *t* it is a feminine participle used as a “complementary infinitive” or “verbal noun”.⁵ Due to that fact the author introduced new relation between these two verbs. He enriched the meaning of the predicate of each sentence giving

Inflection of the Verb in the Pyramid Texts, Malibu 1984, II, 576) is “Usually identified as caus. 2ae gem., but the verb exhibits no specific features of that conjugation. No simplex is known (unless Urk. I 19,3; 20,2 *š*;) and the verb does not have causative meaning”. The verb only appears in few compositions and probably it was the reason why the scribe overlooked to copy *t* at the end of it. Cf. also orthography of the verb *dd* in Pyr. 1270 b and 1271 a.

² Chaos-god, cf. R. O. Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, Oxford 1969, 217 n. 1.

³  sometimes these two signs are transliterated like this: *ntr wr* (L. Speleers, *Les Textes des Pyramides Egyptiennes*, Bruxelles 1924, 90) or *ntr smsw* (C. E. Sander-Hansen, *Studien zur Grammatik der Pyramidentexte*, København 1956, §131).

⁴ After R. O. Faulkner, op. cit., 217 but R. Speleers, op. cit. I, 90; II, 90, prefers the meaning “row”. Cf. also Wb IV, 268, 3.

⁵ E. Edel, *Altägyptische Grammatik*, Rome 1955, 366,2; C.E. Sander-Hansen, op. cit., 44(§128), 45(§131).

special function to it: to intensify semantic value to the point that the listener accepts description of this action as expressed verbs.⁶

An unknown author, the composer of this utterance desired to strengthen the belief connected with the life beyond the grave. He has drawn his literary picture which exhibits fictitious behaviour of the king after his death using following motives: the king wanders until he reaches Junu, the town where the sun-god Re^c, creator of the world is worshipped. Then the dead king stops there and offers incense to the god in order to be allowed to accompany Re^c in his boat while crossing the sky. In these three stages the author reveals new connections and interdependances. Every stage in turn is built of simple *tropos* (here verbal sentence) and shows phenomenons that could be observed in everyday life. The author used them consciously as well as using phonetic and grammatical rules for his fictitious picture. The worshipper having this, reconstructs the order of the literary picture within the compass of the utterance, accepts describing action expressed by verbs as the truth (axiom) and has no objection to it. This created vision of the literary picture within the compass of utterances adds strength to his growing conviction of the real existence of life after the death. It is the reason why he wishes the dead king life and happiness.

⁶ A. Dembska, *A Note on Urk. V 171,2*, RO 1996, L, 1, pp. 5–7.