Religious texts as a source of a contemporary study of Antiquity – linguistic interpretations of the Pyramid Texts and the Coffin Texts

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Abstract

Religious writings are usually treated in the same way as mythological narratives. It is consistently forgotten that they express faith. They were testimonies of people's beliefs. They were designed to verbalise transcendental reality – to express the Inexpressible. When one comprehends and digests these facts, a scholar is far better able to perceive the predicament, the arduousness of the scrutiny of this genre of written sources.

While studying the written sources the image we would like to recapture is an image scattered in words and phrases, in language. It is embodied in language itself. Thus, the author of the paper scrutinised the world's oldest religious texts – the *Pyramid Texts* and the *Coffin Texts*, against a backdrop of general remarks, to show the uniqueness and specificity of analysis and interpretation of this type of sources.

Keywords: Ancient Egypt, textual sources, linguistic worldview, *Pyramid Texts*, *Coffin Texts*.

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Religious texts as a source of a contemporary study of Antiquity – linguistic interpretations of the *Pyramid Texts* and the *Coffin Texts*

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"To learn a language is to have one more window from which to look at the world."
□ □ 门语言，就是多一个观察世界的窗户□
xué yì mén yǔyán, jiù shì duō yí ge guānchá shìjiè de chuānghu
(Chinese proverb)

"Those who know many languages live as many lives as the languages they know."
(Czech proverb)

Linguistic background

Religious language – in particular this of the rituals – has been widely studied. However, analyses usually are concerned with a practical and wordy description of the rituals themselves and not language as a means of transmission of religious thought and faith.

It is apparent that researchers as all of us are formed by their home environment, the society in which they grew up, by their education and the people they met during their lives etc. All of this impinges on the interpretations of the sources they study.

Scholars aim to use all available data to illustrate the issues under study. Obviously though, for historians the written sources represent the base, as archaeologists researching ancient civilisations intuitively concentrate on art, architecture and other material manifestations of the analysed culture.

Yet, scholars have hardly ever known well enough the context(s) of the sources at their disposal and not being believers of the studied religion, and living out of the cultural circle they analyse, they naturally and instinctively have an external and critical approach.

However, awareness of all such hindrances, as well as having considered and keeping in mind the inherent complexity which studying religious writings entails, makes scholarly apprehension more complete, thorough and far-reaching as well as multi-faceted.

We – as users of the language – rarely ponder its nature or the way we transmit our thoughts, feelings or needs. Still some of us as scholars studying the language have only recently started to analyse the linguistic worldview, namely to analyse culture *in* a language. As the present author stated elsewhere (Popielska-Grzybowska 2011, 680-681, 692) the religious language is to express the Inexpressible, as it is – in particular in the land on the Nile in ancient times – language was believed to possess creative potency.

Consequently, writing down and then reading out loud the written words caused them to create religious reality indispensable to achieve certain stages in the way to the beyond and proceeding there concurrently.

The present author has conducted a long-term experiment through her university lectures involving presenting her students and sometimes her colleagues as well with various, carefully chosen, fragments of texts taken out of context. The excerpts include very different genres of literature and usually of very well-known publications as well, as for instance the following:

> "To take the vague idea first. I attach a good deal of importance to vague ideas. All things that 'aren't evidence' are what convince me. I think a moral impossibility the biggest of all impossibilities." (Chesterton, 2011, 253)

But even well-known and well-established texts of culture may seem arduous. Let us see for example – perversely quoted in Portuguese to make the task even more difficult:

> "Rios sabem o seguinte: não há pressa. Vamos chegar lá algum dia." (Milne, 1926, 61)

For if we cite in English the text becomes much easier:

> "Rivers know this: there is no hurry. We shall get there some day." (Milne, 1926, 56)

Does though the change of the language for the one of the original make it a "piece of cake"? Not necessarily and certainly not always and not for all, even if someone read the book. It happens even when the quote is "omnipresent" in our culture. To initiate the brainstorming and discussion the following study questions were asked: When approximately was the text written and for whom (adult, youth or children)? What genre is it?

These are only two very simple examples out of very many and very diversified ones used during the experiment (different languages were checked as well). This shows how easy it is to "deceive" readers when the context is missing. Therefore, the scholar who finds a fragment of a text stands at a similar position when needing to decide about the so-called "Sitz-im-Leben" of the discovered and scrutinised writing. The present author believes that studying cultures through language and in language gives better grounds for multifaceted and transdisciplinary analysis and hence enhances its thoroughness and also affords different perspectives. Thus, this study constitutes analysis of the linguistic worldview (see in particular Bartmiński, Tokarski 1986; Bartmiński 2012 and bibliography therein, see also: Grzegorczykowa 2010, 188–196; Wierzbicka 2016).

Furthermore, the scrutiny of religious texts of the present author is strongly influenced by the works of the late philosopher Leszek Kołakowski and his ruminations on the nature of the language of religion in general (Kołakowski 1991, 53–64; 2004, 338; 2010, 168, 172). He understood religious language as almost or practically untranslatable. Moreover works of other linguist Teresa Dobrzyńska (Dobrzyńska 1973, 171–88; 1974, 107–22; 1994, especially 79–132) are of import to the present research.

Based on the ancient Egyptian religious written records studied to date it seems vividly crucial that – and contrary to many established opinions (see e.g.: Tillich 1959; Durand 1964/1998; Geertz 1968, 1973, 1983, 2000; Todorov 1977, 203-207; Burkert 2006, 20) – religious language is not symbolic to the same extent as many other forms of language and as many presume, and its inexpressibility does not preclude interpretation. This does not mean that it does not use symbols to portray the described reality, it means though that when symbols are used they have archetypal value (Wheelwright 1968) which makes them *topoi* (Popielska-Grzybowska 2007) which in consequence makes them universal to every human being across time and space, hence in the distant past and today. Moreover, certainly it is not symbol aiming at generalisation or classifications according to types denoting "conjunctive polysemy" (Rimmon 1977, 16-26) and originating from non-linguistic sources (Bartoszyński 1998, 15).

Philosophers and artists frequently accuse language of being inefficient in expressing the human condition. Neither science nor language, according to Ludwig Wittgenstein (Wittgenstein 1922, 6.52) can even approach to resolutions to human troubles or even begin to approximate the quiddity of things. A response to this was phenomenology, especially in Edmund Husserl's apperception, namely in reaching the essence of the thing by intuition and visualising, evidencing impressions which is impossible to achieve by scientific methods. There is no place here to enter too deeply into these philosophical discussions from the beginning of the 20th century, but to conclude it is still worth mentioning the ontological conviction of Gilles Deleuze that human beings are inexpressible by nature (see for instance: Deleuze 1969). Nonetheless, within all these ruminative trends inexpressibility is a negative feature. Here, however, comes religion, and in particular the language of religion. In religion, inexpressibility is indispensible and positive as it leaves room for faith, which is unconditional and unquestionable.

While delving into ancient and religious writings the scholar encounters at least two grades of hardship, which can even preclude the studies being told, namely a time distance and the "religiousness" of the language used. The second fact when forgotten appears to invalidate the results of research in particular, for treating records of religion as mythical narratives discredits their significance and semantic and semasiological responsibility and onus.

As far as ancient Egypt is concerned, a very crucial moment had to occur when oral rituals during funerals started being preserved in a written form – when orality gave way to literacy (Ong 2002, 1-30). Perhaps then the ancient Egyptians felt a profound change and as a consequence "elaborated" a system which could function efficiently in new circumstances, *ergo* adjusting the performativity of oral rites to their written versions. It must have played a vital role in obtaining the same effect that (habitually repetitive) pronouncing of the formulae had previously assured. This seems to be resolved by means of the proper act of writing and thus providing letters, words and phrases for multiple use and multiple recitation whenever need be.

Furthermore, scholars working on ancient religious texts not only interpret ancient religious worldview(s) but also grapple with a rendering of ancient and sacral linguistic worldview that might be most burdensome and challenging part of the job.

Usually oral or written pieces are meant to communicate a message.[1] However, this is not the case if accounts of religion are regarded. The main aim of the religious language is not communication. The intent of texts of a given religion is to provide its believers with records of faith and to assist in a deepening of faith, and in the case of ancient Egyptian texts it was in fact the creation of religious reality as well (Popielska-Grzybowska 2011).

Correspondingly religious language escapes easy categorisations and requirements of pragmatics. The author is not known or obscure and the addressee is not obvious. Moreover, as it was mentioned above, the communicative function of the text is secondary or not important at all. However, respectively, these texts' modality is very high, as is their subjectivity, as they are directed to communities and individuals simultaneously. Modality in religious writings implies impossibility – but apparent or seeming inexpressibility and even impossibility is a meaningful trait of faith. Hence, in this very specific and unique pursuit, inexpressibility is – awkward as it may seem – a value; it connotes positive aspects. Nonetheless and perversely contradictorily to the above-written, impossibility within faith does not exist and thus from absolute impossibility 'something' becomes "absolute" potentiality if and when true faith exists. More, when true faith is concerned, absolute potentiality becomes absolute necessity, and it becomes inevitable and indispensable. Faith does not leave room for doubt and if it is true faith it creates desired reality. In opposition to literature, which "through 'word' tries to create a 'state of lack of words'" (see P. Valéry 1971 and Bartoszyński 1998, 6), religion does not **try** but **creates** by means of word or verb.[2] This distinction is crucial and the significance ascribed to subjects or actions – but notwithstanding this important difference – is language, which – in ancient cultures as well – has the potency to create. However, one needs not put aside and forget that – besides the natural religiousness of the ancient, the Egyptians were very practical and in their world every single thing had to function in compliance with the needs of people – function effectively and perfectly. As a consequence of this attitude the ancient Egyptians wrote extraordinary *Letters to the Dead* claiming assistance from their deceased relatives under imminence of desisting the performing funerary cult of the said ancestor. Appropriately, the Egyptians provided – firstly their pharaohs and as the years went by equally other persons from the family and attendants of the Kings – with a set/sets of handy solutions regarding the journey to the beyond and life thereafter, namely the *Pyramid* and the *Coffin Texts* or later the *Books of the Afterlife* and/or the *Book of the Dead*, and others. These were ready-to-use "tools" to achieve the inevitable, namely the existence in the sky among the Imperishable Stars or in the Fields of the hereafter.

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[1] See R. Jakobson's theory concerning the communicative function of language and his presumption that any cognitive experience can be expressed in any language (Jakobson 1959). However, it may be said that a piece of writing or the words spoken serve to communicate a message – usually but not always, as some examples show. Compare for instance Medieval apparent "love songs" sung by bards to married women at contests at festivals or the experimental text by Reinhard Lettau published in 1963, which actually does not have a genre and any concrete or known linguistic form. Its form is totally open. Such texts first appeared in F. Kafka's oeuvre. In all quoted examples functional aspect of the form of the text is misleading or at least seems not to exist at all.

[2] Interesting to observe how various languages understand and render the creative element in Christian religion. For instance, in English and Polish word/słowo respectively: "In the beginning was the Word…" / "Na początku było Słowo…", while in Romance languages, as for example Portuguese it is verb: "No princípio era o Verbo…".

The *Pyramid Texts*

Here one advances with the exemplification from the *Pyramid Texts*. It is said that beauty is in the eye of the beholder, equally and correspondingly so potentiality and effectiveness is in the thought and faith of the believer. Consequently the primaeval nature of the matter and its figurative presentation guarantees efficiency and performance, as is evident in one of the most ancient fragments of the *Pyramid Texts*, the so-called "Cannibal Hymn":

§ 393a *gp pt jHjj sbAw*
§ 393b   *nmnm pDwt sdA qsw Akrw*
§ 393c *gr r.sn gnmw*
§ 394a   *mA.n.sn NN xa bA*
§ 394b   *m nTr anx m jtw.f wSb m mwwt.f*
§ 394c   *NN pj nb zAbwt xm.n mwt.f rn.f*
§ 395a   *jw Spsw NN m pt jw wsr.f m Axt*
§ 395b   *mr tm jt.f ms sw jw ms.n.f sw wsr sw r.f*

"The sky has got overcast,
The stars darkened,
The celestial expanses quiver,
The bones of the earth-gods tremble,
Those-who-move became still,
"For they have seen the King appearing (being) *ba*,
As the god who lives on his fathers
And feeds on his mothers;
The King is a master of dignitary
Whose mother does not know his name.
The glory of the King is in the sky,
His power is in the horizon
Like his father Atum who gave birth to him,
Although he gave birth to him (=the King),
He (=the King) is mightier than he."
(*PT* spell 273 §393-395 [W 180a, T 275a])

Or even more explicitly, for with the use of physical, sensory picturing while exposing the primary needs and character of the power of the pharaoh (Popielska-Grzybowska, forthcoming b), but concurrently it is potency deriving from ancestors, from tradition embodied in the development of family "heritage" as far as physical, corporal, mental and historical elements are concerned:

§ 407a   *wnjs pj sxm wr sxm m sxmw*
§ 407b   *wnjs pj aSm aSm aSmw*
§ 407c   *gmjj.f m wAt.f wnm.f n.f sw mwmw*
§ 407d   *jw mkt wnjs m HAt saHw nbw jmw Axt*

§ 408a   *wnjs pj nTr sms r smsw*
§ 408b   *jw pSr n.f xAw jw wdn n.f Stw*
[...]
§ 412a   *aHaw pj n wnjs HH Dr.f pj Dt*
§ 412b   *m saH.f pn n mrr.f jrr.f isDD.f nj jr.n.f*
§ 412c   *jm Dr Axt Dt r nHH*

"Unis is the great power
Who has power over the powers;
Unis is the sacred image –
Who is most sacred of the sacred images,
Whomsoever he finds in his way,
He will devour piece by piece.
For the place of Unis is at the head of all the luminous spirits who are in the
        Akhet.
For Unis is the god who is more elderly than the oldest.
Thousands serve him,
Hundreds present offering to him.
[...]
Continuity is the lifetime of Unis,
Everlastingness is his limit in this his prerogative of:
If-he-likes-he-does:
If-he-dislikes-he-does-not,
which is at the limits of the Akhet for ever and ever."
(*PT* spell 274 § 407–8, 412a-c [W 180b, T 275b])

Ancient Egyptian religious texts' focus is put on sensory aspects and efficiency and thus completeness of the body:

§ 1673a   *j.wn.Tn n NN jrtj.f wbA.Tn n.f Srt.f*
§ 1673b   *wp.Tn n NN r.f snS.Tn n.f msDrwj.f*
§ 1673c   *srd.Tn n NN Swtj.f*
§ 1674a   *D.Tn swA NN Hr nTr*
§ 1674b   *mH m saHw TAww*
§ 1674c   *wnm.n.Tn nw gm NN zp xr.Tn*
§ 1674d   *rD.Tn n NN zp (sk sw) jj.j*

"May you open his eyes for the King, may you break open his nostrils for him, may you split open his mouth for the King, may you unblock his ears for him and grow his plumes for him. May you cause the King to surpass the god, who is filled with the power of the winds. When you have eaten this, the King will find the time by you, and you will give the King the time, for he has come."
(*PT* spell 602 §1673 a-1674 d [M 227, N 362])

Moreover, some verbal pictures are very strongly and distinctly culturally typical as the following one:

§ 1080a   *sA.j jr sA n nTrw jpw mHtjw pt*
§ 1080b   *j.xmw-sk nj sk.j*
§ 1080c   *j.xmw-bdS nj bdS.j*
§ 1080d   *j.xmw-znjw nj znjw.j*

"I am back to back with those northern gods of the sky – the Imperishable Stars and I will not perish,
(they) who cannot grow fatigued – I will not grow fatigued,
(they) who cannot pass away – I will not pass away."
(*PT* spell 503 §1080a-d [P 457, M 335, N 539, Nt 272a])

Although the message of this excerpt may seem to be bizarre in accordance with our European perception it was natural in the Egyptian one, for it does not necessarily mean verbatim turning one's back to the back of the other and thus showing disrespect, but rather supporting and protection which the gods and Imperishable ones in particular can secure.

Collecting literally every single thing and hedging any unexpected situation during the journey to the sky and in consequence enabling limitless existence there was safeguarded by the Egyptians on very many levels. Therefore, all attainable means were used. It was then appreciated when the concept was possibly the oldest – as is in the case of the text quoted above – and still better, if most primaeval in its nature, as identification with the creator god Atum was.

As the present author has already studied elsewhere (Popielska-Grzybowska 2011) a crucial element of religious reality creation was grammar (and meticulous and vigilant choice of vocabulary), namely for instance the application of superlatives – as above, or varying moods, for example the imperative as follows secured immediate actions:

*§ 1914a   *hA NN pw anx anx anx.t anx.t m rn.k pw xr nTrw*
*§ 1914b   *xa.tj w wpjw*
*§ 1914c   *bA js xnt anxw sxm js xnt Axjw*

"O King, live the life! Be alive, be alive in this your name which is by the gods, you have appeared like Wpjw, likewise a soul at the head of the living, likewise a power at the head of the spirits."
(*PT* spell 665C § 1914 [P 25, M 196, N 337, Nt 241a])

Or else:

§ 275e   *a n NN m a ra nwt Szp a.f*
§ 275f   *Sw sSw sw Sw sSw sw*

"The hand of the King is in the hand of Ra.
O Nut, take his hand!
O Shu, lift him up!
O Shu, lift him up!"
(*PT* spell 253 § 275 [W 164, T 195])

The above quoted text is a beautiful example of the Egyptian sensibility for sound effects and play-on-words. Even for a non-specialist it is easy to notice the word play on homophonic stems (instrumentation): *Sw sSw sw Sw sSw sw* First of all such repetitions may be treated as very peculiar by a contemporary author. This is what happened with many ancient expressions, even those from the Bible, that at first they were rendered verbatim, but over time such translations were abandoned, as for instance: sleep with a deep sleep, or die with/by death.

The other highly thought provoking genre in the *Pyramid Texts* are the "serpent spells." They are so riveting because of the exceptional difficulty of their translation. There is no place to scrutinise the topic here but it is worth mentioning that R.C. Steiner (Steiner 2011) comments on them clearly: "at least four of these serpent spells (PT 235, 236, 281, and 286) are orthographically distinct from the rest of the Pyramid Texts. They are characterized by exceptional phonetic spelling reminiscent of the "group writing" used to write foreign names and texts in later times. Moreover, they contain several occurrences of a very non-Egyptian sequence of three *alephs* that was frequently miswritten by Egyptian copyists." (Steiner 2011, 77) [See also Popielska-Grzybowska 2015, 90-91]

Conversely to support the same use of superlatives in a similar role though with a much more irrevocable result and execution:

§ 654a   *jhj jhj Tz Tw NN pw*
§ 654b   *Szp n.k tpj.k jnq n.k qsw.k*
§ 654c   *sAq n.k awt.k*
§ 654d   *wxA n.k tA jr jf.k*
§ 655a   *Szp n.k t.k j.xm xsD Hnqt.k j.xmt amA*
§ 655b   *aHa.k jr aAw xsf rxwt*
[…]
§ 657e   *Tz Tw NN pw nj mjjt.k/mt.k*

"Oho, oho! Raise yourself, o King, receive your head, collect your bones, gather your (body) members together, throw off earth from your body, receive your bread which does not grow mouldy and your beer which does not grow sour, and stand at the door which restrain (common) people.
[…]
Rise yourself, o King, for you have not died!"
(*PT* spell 373 § 654a-655b; § 657e [T 204, M 15, N 62])

This simple – it may seem – linguistic procedure secured what was known and provided for the deceased. Its performative function always played its role when need be. The types

of narration, namely the narrative employed to describe the substantiality of the afterlife world is axiomatic, incontrovertible and palpable:

§ 365a   *sq.t n.f tA rdw r pt pr.f jm r pt*
§ 365b   *prr.f Hr Htj n jdt wrt*
§ 366a   *j.pA NN pn m Apd xnn.f m xprr*
§ 366b   *j.pA.f m Apd xnn.f m xprr*
§ 366c   *m nst Swt jmt wjA.k ra*

"A stairway to the sky is set up for him that he may mount upon it to the sky – and he will ascend on the smoke of the great censing.
This King will fly up as a bird and alight as a beetle – he does flies up as a bird and alights as a beetle on the empty throne which is in your bark, o Ra."
(*PT* spell 267 § 365a-366c [W 174, T 208, P 344, M 17, N 343])

Hence what is described – the more details the better – as existing and functioning acquires the hallmarks of the real and irrefutable and irrefragable – that is 'true.' This way religious creation through words, verbs – namely through language, was assured. Nobody questioned this potency present in the language thus it constituted the basics of ancient religions, in the case of the Egyptians as a very foresightful and thrifty nation in particular, thus no negligence or even fortuity was admitted or accepted. The dead become sons of the gods and goddesses, their images and progenies:

§ 207c   *xpr.k Hna jt.k tm qA.k Hna jt.k tm*

"May you come into being with your father Atum, may you rise together with your father Atum." (*PT* spell 222 §207c [W 155, T 177, P 264, M 193, N 332, Nt 237])

Or in different words:

§ 213a   *tm sja n.k wnjs n Sn n.k sw m Xnw awj.k*
§ 213b   *zA.k pw n Dt.k n Dt*

"O Atum, raise this Unis up to you, enclose him within your embrace, for he is your son of your body forever."
(*PT* spell 222 §213 [W 155, T 177, P 264, M 193, N 332, Nt 237])

In this manner the final provision for the deceased was their identification with the gods and lastly – as crowning of all efforts – equitation with Atum:

§ 134a   *hA wnjs j Sm.n.k js mt.tj Sm.n.k anx.t*
§ 134b   *Hms Hr xnd wsjr abA.k m a.k wD.k mdw n anxw*
§ 134c   *mks nHbt.k m a.k wD mdw n StAw swt*
§ 135a   *awj.k m tm rmnwj.k m tm Xt.k m tm sA.k m tm*
§ 135b   *pH.k m tm rdwj.k m tm Hr.k m zAb*

§ 135c *pSr n.k jAwt Hrw pSr n.k jAwt stS*

"O Unis, it is not dead but alive that you have gone away.
Sit upon the throne of Osiris!
Your sceptre *aba* is in your hand, may you give orders to the living.
mekes and your sceptre *nehebet* are in your hand, so give orders to those-whose-seats-are-hidden.
Your arms are those of Atum, your shoulders are those of Atum,
Your belly is that of Atum, your back is that of Atum,
Your hind-parts are those of Atum, your legs are those of Atum,
Your face is that of a Jackal.
Let the mounds of Horus serve you, and let the mounds of Seth serve you."
(*PT* spell 213 [W 146, T 168, P 255, M 184, N 323, Nt 228])

Therefore – as in many cultures and languages 'to be healthy' is to be whole and/or complete[3] – in ancient Egypt to be whole and complete was to be alive. Moreover, the final stage of completeness appears to be the creative essence of all the gods – the quintessence of the creator – *kA*

§ 147b *Tn kw jn.sn m rn.k n nTr xpr.k j.tm.t (m) nTr nb*
§ 148a *tp.k m Hrw dAt j.xm-sk*
§ 148b *mxnt.k m xntj-jrtj j.xm-sk*
§ 148c *msDrwj.k zAtj tm j.xm-sk jrtj.k zAtj tm j.xm-sk*
§ 148d *fnD.k m zAb j.xm-sk jbHw.k spdw j.xm-sk*
§ 149a *awj.k Hp dwA-mwt.f dbH.k pr.k r pt prr.k*
§ 149b *rdwj.k jmst qbH-snw.f dbH.k hA.k jr nwt hAA.k*
§ 149c *awt.k zAtj tm j.xm-sk*
§ 149d *nj sk.k nj sk kA.k Twt kA*

"Raise yourself – say they, in your name of god become complete of every god:
Your head is that of Horus of the Duat, O Imperishable!
Your face is that of *khentj-jrtj*, O Imperishable!
Your ears are those of the Twins of Atum, O Imperishable!
Your eyes are those of the Twins of Atum, O Imperishable!
Your nose is that of the Jackal, O Imperishable!
Your teeth are those of Sopdu, O Imperishable!
Your arms are those of Hep and Duamutef,
which you need to ascend to the sky and you shall ascend
Your legs are those of Jmsetj and Kebehsenuf,
which you need to descend to the lower sky and you shall descend.
All your members are the Twins of Atum, O Imperishable!
You shall not perish and your *ka* shall not perish – you are *ka*."

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[3] Personal communication with prof. Krystina Rutkowska during the EUROJOS XII conference, Lublin, Poland 7-9 December 2016 (Eastern Slavonic languages).

(*PT* spell 215 § 147-149 [W 148, T 170, P 257, M 186, N 325, Nt 230])

As a consequence, the texts inform:

§ 1609a   *wsjr nmtjj m zAf mr n Tawt kA n nTrw nb*

"O Osiris Nemtiemzaf Merenre, you are the essence (*ka*) of all the gods."
(*PT* spell 589 § 1609a [M 32a, N 43, Nt 21b])

Concluding the present ruminations on the *Pyramid Texts* let us invoke the *passus* which demonstrates faith in the power and inevitability of the words composed and used by the authors:

§ 462a   *nj mdw n wnjs r tA xr rmT*
§ 462b   *nj xbnt.f r pt xr nTrw*
§ 462c   *dr.n wnjs mdw.f sk.n wnjs jr.f ja (r.f wnjs) n pt*
§ 463a   *spA.n wp wAwt wnjs r pt mm snw.f nTrw*
§ 463b   *jT.n wnjs awj m smn*
§ 463c   *H.n wnjs DnH(wj.f) m Drt*
§ 463d   *pA pA rmT (j).pA(n) wnjs r.f m a.Tn*

"There is no word against Unis on Earth among people, there is no crime/accusation in the sky among the gods, for Unis has annulled the word against him(self), which he has destroyed this one against ascending to the sky. Wepwawet has caused him to fly up to the sky among his brothers, the gods. Unis has assumed arms as a goose, he flaps his wings as a kite – the flier has flown, O people, he (Unis) has flown away from you."
(*PT* spell 302 §462-463 [W 207, T 288, P 419, M 202, N 346])

The *Coffin Texts*

Did the way of perceiving and thinking of the Egyptians change as viewed in the later religious texts, the so-called *Coffin Texts*? It certainly did – though to some extent. Primarily, the recipient of the writings changed. Furthermore, the material on which the texts were written altered and thus there was less space to convey the "instructions" or caveats while proceeding on the way to the beyond. Although the *Coffin Texts* had more addressees the pharaoh was still among them and, added to which, could be perceived as a guarantor of the everlastingness and order of the world:

298 g   *Ts tp.k anx HAt.k*
298 h   *jwf.k n.k wn{t}.tj Hr Ha.k*
298 i   *wnn.k m Smsw anx.k*

"May your head be raised and may your heart live,
may you be your own flesh for you and may you be existing through your body.

May you be as (one of the) Followers and may you live."
(*CT* III 298 g-i spell 230)

The same as earlier grammatical exertions were adopted, as for instance: a confirmative narration, different moods and degrees or simple repetition of the most desired occurrences. All in all, it is the deceased's pronounced out loud will that creates:

170 h   *Hr jb DbAt nt wabww*

170 i   *jwtj mt.n.sn n mt sjn*

170 j   *n mnjj.j n.sn n mnjj xAx*

171 a   *jsk jr wnn.jm tA pn n anxww Hr jrt smnt Htp n nTr n nTrw*

171 b   *prt-Hrw n Axw*

171 c   *jnk jr tp.sn tA*

171 d   *jnk pw wnnt.f m tA pn anxww*

171 e   *jb.j jr.f awt.j*

171 f   *sDm(w) n.j j(w)f.j*

171 g   *Ts.f wj*

171 h   *jnk nxx*

"Pure Ones, because of whom I will not die by slow death, I will not perish because of them, I will not perish instantaneously. See my existence is created in this land of the living because of what has been created, there are settled for me the divine offerings for the gods and invocation-offering for the luminous spirits. I truly am their survivor. It truly is I who will exist in this land of the living, my heart will make my limbs. My body submits me, it elevates me up, for I am the Old One."
(*CT* I 170 h-171 h spell 39)

Still it is evident how the words devoid of context can be misleading:

483 j   *ra tm mwt*

483 k   *sDt*

483 l   *sDt*

483 m   *jw.n.j wsr.j Hna Tn*

"Ra Atum is dead! Fire! Fire! I have come, so that I may be mighty together with you."
(*CT* VII 483 j-m spell 1138)

Fortunately, ancient Egyptian provides many possibilities of rendering the same phrase. One cannot be absolutely sure that it is not a noun 'death' which was meant by the writers of the text, and if it is so the meaning alters entirely and hence entails better into the context of the spell which puts emphasis on the potency of both the god and the King.

Moreover, stating clearly word by word to confirm the intended action or happening was crucial, thus:

399 f *jT.n.f nHH Ht(s).n.f Dt*
399 g *n mt N pn m mt wHm*

"he has fetched continuity and he completed everlastingness, namely N will not die the second/repeated death."
(*CT* VI 399 f-g spell 767)

Speaking out loud was evidently most pivotal and gave an imperative significance to the religious texts, that is to say the creation of religious reality within faith and its potency to create:

145 b *jnk jr ntt sx{p}r jwtt*
145 c *Dd.j xpr Hw*
145d *jwt.f aSA xntj msw*
145e *Hr tp nTrw jm jb n nb nTrw*
[...]
145 j *rxjjt mA wj*
145 k *jnk Hp xntj mswt jrr nttx{p}r jwtt*

"I am who makes what is and who brings into being what is not. I speak – Hu comes into being. He will come, being multiple, in charge of the births (See Faulkner 1973-1978, vol. I, 248-249 and footnote 8) at the head of the gods, the one in the heart of the Lord of the gods.
[...]
O you people, see me, for I am the Nile foremost of nascency, who makes what is and who brings into being what is not."
(*CT* IV 145 b-d, j-k spell 320)

An analogous – as in the *Pyramid Texts* – narration could be encountered as means of outlining the background of the occurrences and hence assuring their feasibility as well as veracity or even inevitability:

32 c *prr.f nTr pn r pt*
32d *bA.f r tp.f*
32 e *HkAw.f t awj.f*
32 f *jr n.f jn tm mj qd jr.n.f n.f jm*
32 g *jn.n.f n.f nTrwbAw P jn.n.f n.f nTrw bAw nxn*
32 h *jnq.n.f n.f nTrw jrw pt jrw tA*
32 i *jr.n.sn n.f wTs Hr [a]wj(.sn)*

"This god is ascending to the sky with his soul at his head, his magic in his hands. He has been helped by Atum regarding everything he should have made for him there, he [=Atum] has delivered to him the gods the Souls of Pe, he has delivered to him the gods the Souls of Nekhen and he has gathered for him the gods who

are in the sky and who are on Earth, they make supports for him on (their) [a]rms."
(*CT* VII 32 c-k spell 832)

Conclusions

Notwithstanding the alterations in the view of the creator, in the *Coffin Texts* the culmination point of the metamorphoses of the dead is the same as in the *Pyramid Texts*. The deceased is the quintessence of every divine being:

108 g *xpr.n.j mtm*
108 h *Ax.n.j m Hr*
108 i *Ax.n nTr nb n dp.n.j sw*

"I have come into being as Atum, I am endued as Horus and I am endued (with) every god whom I have experienced."
(*CT* IV 108 g-i spell 316)

Accordingly in the so-called *Coffin Texts* the final effect – the continual everlastingness of existence in the beyond – was also assured by Atum, but in this very case he was much more assisted by other gods and his son Shu – especially Shu as the King. Taking this into consideration and notwithstanding natural and secondary differences resulting from the above-mentioned circumstances, one may assume that the final effect is the same in the *Pyramid Texts* and the *Coffin Texts* – 'becoming Atum' – is experiencing all gods' formation and conditions. As for example the rubric of the spell 275 ascertains: "Assuming all forms in the Realm of the Dead".

Atum in the *Coffin Texts* appears to assist the deceased when he/she takes different shapes and the creator threatens the enemies away but much more often he manifests himself in his offspring and his sovereignty is bestowed to his son on the grounds that only children ensure and safeguard true continuity and existence.

Consequently, the worldview presented in both the *Pyramid* and the *Coffin Texts* not only demonstrates the providence of the Egyptians but also concentrates on the linguistic performative religious reality creation to secure the stability and eternal continual everlastingness in the name of admiration, lure of and even the lust for life best expressed in and by a child.

178 o *jnk wnntzA mrr.f jrr.f*
178 p *anx.f anx.j*

"... for I am indeed the son who wishes, does, lives – and I live."
(CT IV 178 o-p spell 333)

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