

CHAPTER ONE

Image and Voice: Strategies and Dynamics of Egyptian Self-Presentation

The writing of the non-royal self¹⁸ or “life-writing”¹⁹ is one of the most ancient literary practices and forms through which individuals attempt to express identity and leave fingerprints in time to avoid obscurity and ensure survival.²⁰ This genre of writing began early in ancient Egyptian and Mesopotamian history.²¹ That tradition was thus deeply rooted in the post-Homeric and Classical Periods in Greece,²² the Hellenistic²³ and Graeco-Roman²⁴ world,²⁵ and Arabic civilization,²⁶ and it has remained one of the most popular literary genres in contemporary writing.

BRIEF HISTORY OF BIOGRAPHY IN ANCIENT EGYPTIAN LITERATURE

Ancient Egyptian self-presentations appeared in the Old Kingdom and

- ¹⁸ The self can be best defined, according to Olshen (2001: 799), “as a kind of subjective structure—that is, one belonging entirely to the subject, to the individual who experiences, who is conscious, who has an ‘inner life’ and a point of view.” Olshen (2001: 800) further states that “Instead of a concept of self, Stern suggests that we think in terms of the ‘sense of self, by which is intended something that encompasses more, something that extends further back in personal history, than a *concept of self*.”
- ¹⁹ For more on the term “life-writing,” see Winslow (1980: 24), who points out that the inclusive term “life-writing,” which has been introduced since the eighteenth century CE, can mean “biography” in the narrow sense and in general “autobiography.” See also Jolly (2001: ix), who states that the term “life-writing” refers to “openness and inclusiveness across genre” and “encompasses the writing of one’s own or another’s life.”
- ²⁰ For more on survival and “life writing” tradition, see Ames 2001: 854–856.
- ²¹ For more on the history and origin of this literary form in ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia, see Misch 1951: 20–46. For an overview and historical survey of this genre in ancient Egyptian literature from the Old Kingdom to the Late Period, see Gnirs 1996b; 2001; Perdu 2000; Frood 2004; 2007; 2011; 2013; Bassir 2014. For more on what Longman calls “fictional Akkadian autobiography” in ancient Mesopotamia, see Longman 1991; see also Haul 2009. For more on what Greenstein calls “autobiographies” in ancient Western Asia, see Greenstein 2000.
- ²² For more on the development of Greek biography in Classical Greece, see Momigliano 1993.
- ²³ For more on self-definition in the Hellenistic world, see Bulloch et al. 1993.
- ²⁴ For more on self-presentation in ancient Rome, see Gleason 1995.
- ²⁵ For more on “autobiography” and its development in these cultural periods, see Misch 1951: 59 ff.; Vasunia 2001.
- ²⁶ For more on this genre in Arabic literature, see Kramer 1991. For more on autobiography in modern Arabic literature, see Ostle, Moor, and Wild 1998; and on history and biography in medieval Islamic culture, see Hamad 1998.

flourished until Roman times. The text of Metjen,²⁷ from the late Third Dynasty, could be considered²⁸ one of the first self-presentations in ancient Egyptian literature, although it refers to some juridical issues. However, John Baines points out that the early Fifth Dynasty²⁹ is the beginning of what he calls “the earliest ‘biographical’ texts with continuous language³⁰ – as against title strings, other non-continuous material, and offering and curse formulas.”³¹ The Old Kingdom³² witnessed the real emergence of this genre, which in the First Intermediate Period³³ succeeded in showing the political fragmentation of the country into competing principalities. With the reunification of the country by the early Middle Kingdom,³⁴ self-presentations reflected a new spirit. In the early New Kingdom,³⁵ they were dense with historical events, but they failed to flourish in the Amarna Period. In the Ramesside Period,³⁶ biographies became more concerned with the funerary cult,³⁷ a tendency that continued and grew in the Third Intermediate³⁸ and Late Periods.³⁹

DEFINITIONS

The genre of non-royal “life-writing” witnessed several attempts to define the different forms that protagonists might use to express themselves or the lives of others.

²⁷ For classical treatments of this text, see Goedicke 1966: 1–71; 1970: 5–20, pl. I a, b, II; Gödecken 1976.

²⁸ However, as Baines (1999a: 19) stated, we should bear in mind “the fragmentary and uncertain character of the record,” since new evidence could change this reality.

²⁹ However, Baines (1997: 133) pointed out that the self-presentation of Debehni, from the late Fourth Dynasty, is among the earliest self-presentational texts.

³⁰ Baines (1997: 132) considered the language of the late Second and early Third Dynasties “the oldest attested continuous written language.” For more on some of these texts, see Kahl 1994; Kahl, Kloth, and Zimmermann 1995.

³¹ Baines 1999a: 21.

³² For more on Old Kingdom self-presentations, see Baines 1997; Kloth 1998; 2002; 2004; Strudwick 2005; Baud 2005; Stauder-Porchet 2008; 2011.

³³ For more on self-presentations of the Herakleopolitan Period from the Memphite necropolis, see Daoud 2005; 2011.

³⁴ For more on Middle Kingdom and Second Intermediate Period self-presentations, see, for example, Lichtheim 1988; Landgráfová 2011; Kubisch 2008; Frood 2011.

³⁵ See Guksch 1994; Schulz 1995; Gnris 1996a; Jansen-Winkel 2004b; Richal 1997, 2005, 2006; Luiselli 2011.

³⁶ For more on Ramesside self-presentations, see Jansen-Winkel 1993; Frood 2004; 2007.

³⁷ See Assmann 1996b: 259–267; 2002: 229–237; Frood 2007: 15–17, 20–23, 24–26.

³⁸ For more on the self-presentations of the Third Intermediate Period, see Otto 1954; Jansen-Winkel 1985; 2007a; 2007b; Frood 2013. For more on those of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty, see Otto 1954; Heise 2007; Jansen-Winkel 2008; 2009.

³⁹ For more on those of the Late Period, see Otto 1954; Lichtheim 2006c. For more on those of the Saite Period, see Otto 1954; Heise 2007; Jansen-Winkel 2008; 2011; 2014.

The earliest definitions of this genre were “history,” or “history of the life of,” or “life.”⁴⁰ The word “biographia” was also used for “the writing of lives” in the early seventeenth century CE.⁴¹ Then “biography” was used as a term for “the self-written life” by Dryden in 1683 CE.⁴² In 1797 CE the term “autobiography” entered English.⁴³ The best-known terms for this literary form are autobiography, biography, self-fashioning, and self-presentation. Each of these terms also has synonyms; for example, “self-portrayal”⁴⁴ with its multivariate faces can be a synonym for “self-presentation.” Below, I introduce definitions⁴⁵ of the main non-royal life-writing terms in order to lead us to the appropriate term for this genre in ancient Egyptian literature.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY⁴⁶

Autobiography, according to Bonnie J. Gunzenhauser, “is a self-produced, nonfiction text that tells the story of its writer’s life.”⁴⁷ In another definition, autobiography is the most common term for “the writing of one’s own history; the story of one’s life written by himself.”⁴⁸ In a third, autobiography might be also called “self-writing,”⁴⁹ and a fourth is “self-narrative.”⁵⁰ Etymologically, autobiography is a Greek term, literally meaning “self-life-writing.”⁵¹ Edward L. Greenstein points out that “there is no autobiography as such in the ancient world, if we describe ‘autobiography’ as the retrospective interpretation of the author’s own life—a contemplative self-scrutiny of the past.”⁵²

⁴⁰ Winslow 1980: 6. For more on the term “life,” see Winslow 1980: 24–25.

⁴¹ Winslow 1980: 4.

⁴² Winslow 1980: 5.

⁴³ Winslow 1980: 6; Jolly 2001: ix; Gunzenhauser 2001: 75.

⁴⁴ See, for instance, Lichtheim (1989: 211) who uses the term “self-portrayal” in ancient Egyptian literature.

⁴⁵ The problem of defining ancient Egyptian self-presentations has been discussed, for example, by Gnirs 1996b; 2001.

⁴⁶ As Jolly (2001: ix) states, the term “auto/biography” is used “as a convenient way of indicating a scope that is both autobiographical and biographical.” In Egyptology, scholars use frequently the term “(auto)biography” to avoid how to define the text either “autobiography” or “biography.”

⁴⁷ See Gunzenhauser 2001: 75.

⁴⁸ See Winslow 1980: 2.

⁴⁹ See Winslow (1980: 39), who points out that the term “self-biography” is rarely used to replace “autobiography.”

⁵⁰ See Bruner 1987: 11–32.

⁵¹ See Olney 1980: 6.

⁵² Greenstein 2000: 2421.

Although ancient Egyptian biographies do not form autobiographies according to our strict understanding of the term, Olivier Perdu denies the existence of biography in ancient Egypt, and points out that autobiographies are “well attested.”⁵³ Perdu’s opinion is not new; Lichtheim previously made the same point.⁵⁴ However, Baines prefers to use “self-presentation” rather than “autobiography” or “biography.”⁵⁵ Lichtheim states, “If autobiography is the narration of bits of one’s life from a position of self-awareness and reflection, then ancient Egyptian autobiographical inscriptions were true autobiographies.” Ludwig D. Morenz uses “Selbst-Präsentation.”⁵⁶ Thus, in Egyptology there is no common and fixed term for defining this ancient Egyptian genre.

Statues with self-presentational inscriptions in the temples were among the main tools of primary commemoration of Egyptian non-royal elite members. Ancient Egyptian biographies may have been composed during the lives of their protagonists or after their deaths. However, the statue owner may have participated in composing his or her textual biography and choosing the artistic form of the statue. Although almost all biographies are written in the first person, they cannot be called “autobiography” because it is not absolutely known whether the protagonists dictated the content of their textual biographies or one of their family members did so on their behalf. Therefore, self, as expressed in textual biography, is that composed by the patron who ordered the execution of the text.⁵⁷ The sculptor of the statue with biographical inscriptions contributed to the textual biography as well by giving it visual context. The term “self-presentation,” which I will later address, is more comprehensive than biography or the traditional definition autobiography. “Self-presentation” is broad in its scope and encompasses textual and visual aspects of the protagonist’s identity; therefore, it is the best term to apply in studying these ancient Egyptian texts, especially in the late Saite Period.

BIOGRAPHY⁵⁸

Biography, according to Ruth Hoberman, “is a notoriously difficult form to define” “because it borrows from and overlaps with other genres.”⁵⁹ Samuel Johnson defines biographer as “a writer of lives; a relater not of the history of nations, but of

⁵³ Perdu 2000: 2243. See also Naguib 1997: 216–225.

⁵⁴ Lichtheim 1988: 2.

⁵⁵ Baines 2004: 34.

⁵⁶ Morenz 2003; 2001; 2006; 2010: 204 ff.

⁵⁷ See Assmann 1996a: 55.

⁵⁸ Unlike autobiography, which is very productive from Hussein (2001) to Amin (2007). Biography in the western sense of the term is less known in modern Egypt except for a few books that take the shape of a dialog (i.e., questions and answers) between the protagonist and the book author.

the actions of particular persons.”⁶⁰ That means biography is written by a biographer, and not by the protagonist. Miriam Lichtheim points out “In Egypt the genre ‘biography’ did not develop at all.”⁶¹ She further states that “biography and autobiography are not necessarily interrelated. The point is worth stressing, the more so since Egyptologists often appear to be apologetic about calling Egyptian autobiographies by that name and instead speak of ‘biographical inscriptions’, a term which is in fact a misnomer.”⁶² Biography is a partly valid term to describe this ancient Egyptian genre.⁶³ By “biography” I only refer to the text and not to the entire self-presentation, which is multilayered, concerned with text, image, architectural setting, archaeological context, and many wider issues and media than the limited scope of the textual biography tradition.

SELF-FASHIONING

“Self-fashioning” is a term coined by Stephen Jay Greenblatt in his seminal study *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare*,⁶⁴ through which he investigated the process of constructing the identity and public image of an elite member in English literature in Renaissance England c. 1500–1700 CE. This term could be valid with a limited corpus of ancient Egyptian biographies; however, it is not appropriate to use with my corpus of late Saite biographies for several reasons. The most important among these is that the biographies of Neshor and Payeftjauemawyneith do not reveal their self-fashioning, but only a few moments in their lives and careers.

SELF-PRESENTATION⁶⁵

Self-presentation of non-royal elite members through image and text, as forms of artistic and textual expressions, is the most ancient and common genre of ancient Egyptian high culture, from the Old Kingdom until Roman times. It represents a holistic approach and has other synonym definitions such as self-image, self-identity, and self-concept.

Examples for the latter are Salmawi 2001 and Al-Ghitani 2007. Biography in modern Egypt lies under history rather than literature and is mainly concerned with the period and society rather than the individual and his or her private life; see, for example, Amin 1997.

⁵⁹ Hoberman 2001: 109.

⁶⁰ See Winslow 1980: 5–6.

⁶¹ Lichtheim 1988: 2.

⁶² See Lichtheim 1988: 2, although Lichtheim used that term in 2006c.

⁶³ Scholars, Heise (2007) for instance, use biography because it is a more general term.

⁶⁴ Greenblatt 1980.

In the mid-1990s or perhaps earlier, Baines concluded that, for several reasons, the normal term “autobiography” is “quite problematic.”⁶⁶ The most important among them is the presence of visual and textual components, and in several cases architectural components.⁶⁷ Baines’s development of the notion of “self-presentation” firmly established the term “self-presentation” in Egyptological literature.⁶⁸ He started referring to the term in some of his contributions that dealt with the genre of Egyptian biographies. In 2004 he used the term clearly, i.e., *Egyptian Elite Self-Presentation in the Context of Ptolemaic Rule*.⁶⁹ The term has been much developed by his student Elizabeth Frood, who completed her Ph.D. dissertation *Self-Presentation in Ramessid Egypt* in 2004 as well. Moreover, in 2007 she published her monograph *Biographical Texts from Ramessid Egypt*, the textual corpus of her thesis, with an expanded introduction in which she explained her approach and her treatment of these Ramesside texts.⁷⁰ Recently, Rana Salim wrote her Ph.D. dissertation on cultural identity and self-presentation in ancient Egyptian fictional narratives from an intertextual perspective, focusing on narrative motifs from the Middle Kingdom to the Roman Period.⁷¹

⁶⁵ Assmann (1996a: 55–56 [n. 4]) coined a different term, “self-thematization,” as a definition of the textual biography. According to Assmann (1996: 56, [n. 4]), the “propaganda” concept of Simpson (1982: 266–271) is closer to his term “self-thematization.” However, this Assmannian term is not universally accepted by Egyptologists; even Assmann himself uses it in only a few of his publications. See, for example, Assmann 1987; 1996a. Lichtheim (1989: 211) used the term “self-portrayal,” but she (1992b) uses another term, “self-exploration,” as well. She employed several terms throughout her works, without defining them or putting them in their proper contexts. See also Bassir 2014.

⁶⁶ Baines: pers. com.

⁶⁷ Scholars have expended much energy to arrive at the most appropriate term “self-presentation.” Morenz (see, for example, Morenz 1998) used “Erste-Person-Präsentation” to define “autobiography.” Then he employed another term closer to ours, “Selbstdarstellung” or “Selbstpräsentation.” In literature, the term “Selbstdarstellung” and sometimes the term “Selbstportrait” were applied by many scholars in Reichenkron and Haase 1956. Morenz (2003 and above) rejected the term “autobiography” and used “self-presentations” or “presentations of self” instead. Baines was probably the first to employ the term “self-presentation” in Egyptological literature. In 1975 Roth (1975: xiii) used the term “self-presentation” as a literary way of expressing one’s self in writing.

⁶⁸ See, for example, Baines 2004. Lichtheim (1988: 5, 27, 136) mentioned what she calls “autobiographical self-presentation” and “Introductory Self-Presentation” without further explanation. Here Lichtheim used the term in its general meaning without any specification to reveal her own understanding of this concept.

⁶⁹ See Baines 2004.

⁷⁰ Frood 2007: 1–30.

⁷¹ Salim 2013.

On the other hand, it is rare to find scholars using the term “self-presentation” as defined by Baines. Generally, scholars⁷² use the term “self-presentation” in a general way without defining the broad connotations of this term.⁷³ The general term “self-presentation” was first introduced in literature in Erving Goffman’s *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*.⁷⁴ Goffman’s approach is concerned with strategies and ways of controlling impressions from a sociological perspective, based on self-presentation of individuals in everyday life. Currently, self-presentation, as an interdisciplinary component, has entered many fields of humanities, social sciences, business, economics, and communication.⁷⁵

SELF-PRESENTATION: THE TEXT AND BEYOND APPROACH⁷⁶

The approach that I apply here is “self-presentation: text and beyond,” which treats the multivariate faces of self-presentation to which scholars do not draw much attention. The major goal of this approach is to shed light on the historical, archaeological, artistic, linguistic, literary, religious, moral, and self-presentation aspects of the individual’s texts and monuments. These elements can help us to reimagine and reconstruct the individual’s self-presentation and thus his or her own identity. Self-presentation, as a protean genre, is textually and visually fashioned, shaped and governed by two main factors: tools and remembrance. The tools are textual and visual settings that shape the presentation, representing the individual in his or her life and the lives of others. Remembrance is his or her wish and goal to immortalize his or her memory and funerary endowment in the future. It is obviously known that the ancient Egyptians sought immortality, or what Jan Assmann called “self-monumentalization,” and “self-eternalization,” because they had “a deep desire for eternity, for overcoming death and transience.”⁷⁷

⁷⁰ Frood 2007: 1–30.

⁷¹ Salim 2013.

⁷² See, for example, Gnirs 2001: 186–187.

⁷³ See, for example, Roberts 2013.

⁷⁴ Goffman 1973.

⁷⁵ Several examples include the contributions of Domanska, Kellner, and White 1994: 91–100; Gleason 1995; Watson 2000; Fallon 2007.

⁷⁶ Burkes (1999: 171) used the term “self-presentation” in a general way and only considered ancient Egyptian self-presentation as one of the “elements of the ancient Egyptian mortuary tradition.” However, self-presentation in ancient Egypt was not only an element of funerary traditions. See also Bassir 2014.

⁷⁷ See Assmann 1996a: 56.

SAITE SELF-PRESENTATION STRATEGIES AND DYNAMICS

A number of self-presentations, with varied themes and phraseologies, have come down to us from the Saite Period. They were inscribed in various media, on stelae, tomb walls, and statues.⁷⁸ Those of Neshor and Payeftjaumawyneith were executed on statues, mainly naophorous and theophorous in type. Block statues⁷⁹ do not make up any class among these Saite self-presentational statues. The formation and content of Saite self-presentations are usually different in the traditions of the genre from previous periods. The most recognizable characteristic of these texts is the increase of their selectivity in narrativity; they do not narrate the career of the protagonist or even its main stages but rather choose a unique event from it. The moral qualities in Saite biographies are obvious and contribute significantly to the legacy of Egyptian moral values in the Late Period. In addition to the rise of individualism and the clear tone of self-esteem in these texts, the artistic self-presentations of their owners are notable. Furthermore, the strings of titles and epithets of their owners are created in an innovative way, constituting a parallel biography to the main self-presentational text, but one that requires more explanation to be understood by us.

The self-presentations of Neshor and Payeftjaumawyneith incorporate various genres: biography; wisdom literature; narrative; funerary literature; and mortuary liturgy. "Cross-genre writing" is probably an appropriate term to apply to theirs, as they encompass all these genres. Even if their titles are shortened, they narrate the process of their careers as many more complete biographies often did, in the manner of, for example, the self-presentation of Ahmose Son-of-Ibana.⁸⁰ Although their self-presentations are mainly in the first person, Neshor and Payeftjaumawyneith may not have personally composed them.⁸¹ They may have been written by scribes specialized in composing such hieroglyphic self-presentational inscriptions.

VISUAL SELF-PRESENTATION

The visual aspect is the first aspect of self-presentation and is represented by the main representational form, i.e., iconography, of which the statue is the most visible element. These inscribed statues, created in various types of postures and gestures as well as attributes, were displayed in late Saite Period temples as pieces made for eternity.

⁷⁸ For Saite examples, see Otto 1954; Heise 2007, Jansen-Winkel 2014.

⁷⁹ For more on block statues, see, for example, Schulz 1992.

⁸⁰ For more on his self-presentation and tomb at Elkab, see, for example, Schulz 1995; Davies 2009.

⁸¹ For more on this problem, see, for example, Gnirs 1996b; 2001.

TEXTUAL SELF-PRESENTATION

The textual aspect, second of self-presentation, has several components: the titles and epithets of the protagonist; name and genealogy; as well as the various longer texts, such as the appeal to the living, narrative, and wishes for the afterlife. However, this element required literacy and was not easily accessible to all people.

TITLES AND EPHITHETS

Ancient Egyptian titles, epithets, and phrases defined an individual's identity and distinguished his or her stated actions from those indicated by these titles and epithets. Moreover, they played a major role in characterizing the protagonist's life and career and in promoting his or her self-presentation.

NAME AND GENEALOGY⁸²

The protagonist's name is a unique mark that refers to him or her specifically and not to someone else. Furthermore, his or her genealogy confirms the identity of the protagonist. As Jan Assmann states, a name is "a linguistic representation of a person's essence."⁸³

APPEAL TO THE LIVING

The appeal to the living is one of the standard formulae that employed in Egyptian self-presentations to express their protagonists' wishes for the afterlife through their own voices.⁸⁴ However, the appeals to the living in the self-presentations of Neshor and Payeftjauemawyneith are addressed specifically to the priests of the temples because they were inscribed on statues to be placed in the sacred space of those temples.

⁸² Bierbrier (2006: 37) defined genealogy as "the study of family pedigrees." For a general introduction on genealogy, see Watson 2001: 361–363. For the importance of genealogy in Egyptian chronology, see, for example, Bierbrier 2006.

⁸³ See Assmann (2008: 19), who further points out that "A name in the ancient Egyptian sense is not just a name or title as we understand it today but everything that can be said about a person. A name is not just an identifier but also a description, a linguistic representation of a person's essence."

⁸⁴ See, for example, Assmann 1983; Lichtheim 1992a: 155–190.

NARRATIVE⁸⁵

Narrative represents the main vehicle through which the protagonist introduces us to the most important activities and the good deeds that he or she undertook in life. Narrative (or storytelling) has been variously defined. For instance, Barbara Hernstein Smith defined it as “someone telling someone else something that happened,” while, as she points out, William Labov understood it as “any sequence of clauses which contains at least one temporal juncture.”⁸⁶ Finally, Gregory Bateson described it as “a little knot or complex of the species of connectedness we call relevance.”⁸⁷ In my opinion, narrative marks an event that happened in the past giving the sense of history. As Hayden White pointed out, “Where there is no narrative, Croce said, there is no history.”⁸⁸ Peter Gay⁸⁹ declared: “Historical narration without analysis is trivial, historical analysis without narration is incomplete.” Therefore, narrative in biography is one of the main sources from which one can derive history. Nevertheless, narrative in an ancient Egyptian self-presentation is usually in the first person singular, and the protagonist often commences it after the traditional verbal narrative formula *dd=s* “she says”⁹⁰ or *dd=f* “he says.” Narratives reveal some social activities; however, these are secondary to the selves of Neshor and Payeftjauemawyneith. They mention them as proof of their good deeds and personalities: the use of society in their narratives is as a mirror upon which they reflect their selves. Nevertheless, Neshor and Payeftjauemawyneith each chose his own way by which his self-presentation could display and promote the uniqueness of his individuality.

⁸⁵ Roland Barthes’s work on narrative (1977) is still useful. For example, Barthes (1977: 79) remarked that, “Narrative is first and foremost a prodigious variety of genres....international, transhistorical, transcultural: it is simply there, like life itself.” See also White (1980: 5), who cited the second phrase of Barthes. For more on narrative, see, for example, White 1984; Miller 1995.

⁸⁶ See Smith 1980.

⁸⁷ See Hanne 2001: 633.

⁸⁸ See White 1980: 10.

⁸⁹ See Gay 1974: 189; see also White 1980: 10.

⁹⁰ Lichtheim (1988: 37–38) presented three women’s self-presentations on stelae from Naga ed-Dêr from the First Intermediate Period, and further examples of women’s have come down to us from the first millennium BCE. For more on women’s self-presentations, see Jansen-Winkel 2004a. For the Late Period examples, the stela of Isenkhebe (Leiden Museum V 55) and the famous stela of Taimhotep (BM EA 147), see Lichtheim 2006c: 58–65. For Taimhotep, see also Otto 1954; Baines 2004: 56–60. For Taniy (Cairo CG 20564 and Vienna 192), see Lichtheim 1989; Leahy 1989a. Previously De Meulenaere (1991) dated the stela of Taniy to the middle of the Twelfth Dynasty on the ground of textual features; an argument is not accepted by Lichtheim and Leahy on the basis of textual and iconographical features, and they dated this stela into the seventh century BCE. See also Panov 2010.

WISHES FOR THE AFTERLIFE

The protagonist's wishes for his or her afterlife constitute the main message which he or she sends to the deities and the future generations so that they may act in a kindly manner toward him or her.

SAITE PRESERVATION OF MEMORY

The main intention behind these late Saite self-presentations is to present a glorified record of the life achievements of Neshor and Payeftjauemawyneith and to impress their fingerprints upon eternity as a reward in the afterlife. Preserving memory of the individual is the goal of these biographies.

CONCLUSION

The writing of the non-royal self was an ancient tradition in Egyptian literary forms and practices. Through this medium ancient Egyptian individuals expressed their selves in several ways. Image and text were the main tools that the Egyptian elite members utilized to promote their selves. Individuals composed (or had composed for them) self-presentations that would preserve their memory and their selves through the deities and the temple clergy and would allow them to enjoy blessings in the afterlife. In a temple setting, the protagonists wanted to convince the deities to protect them in the afterlife; they thus stressed the benefactions they performed for the temples while alive. In the context of a tomb or funerary stela, where the goal was to convince passersby to present offerings to the owner, self-presentation stresses the owner's kindness to other people during their lifetime. Through these media of art and language, the ancient Egyptian non-royal elite members expressed and promoted their selves. Self-presentation in the Saite Period followed the path of Egyptian textual and visual features of displaying the individual's own self and added innovative means of expression. The self-presentation of Neshor and Payeftjauemawyneith are among the best-known examples in the late Saite Period.⁹¹

⁹¹ See Bassir 2014.