

Mittler. In the literature concerned with Egyptian religion the term¹ intermediary is usually applied to the individual intermediating between god and man rather than between two gods as e.g. *Thot did between *Horus and *Seth or *Shu between *Geb and *Nut.

As in many religions, so also in the Egyptian religion there is a feeling that gods cannot be reached directly² by men (*Gott-Mensch-Beziehung) and no longer reveal themselves directly to humans, but that they can be known by symbols, as distinct from direct hierophanies³, or that they make use of intermediaries: 'I am that eye of Horus, the female messenger of the Sole Lord, who shall not be repeated (*jwtj whmtw.f* i.e. who has no intermediary)⁴. The intermediary in that Egyptian communicatory system of everything

existing which we are accustomed to call religion, is the pharaoh (*König-Gott-Verhältnis; *Fürbitte). He or the priests on his behalf offer *Maat to the gods and he or the civil and military administrators on his behalf realize Maat on earth. He is man's legitimate intermediary to approach the gods, and as such he is able to make the hidden will of the gods known upon earth.

During the crisis that affected the concept of existence in the NK⁵, we see on the one hand an accentuation of the exclusive intermediary position of Akhenaten (*Amenophis IV), who alone knows Aten and in general of the cult of the king (*Königskult) who hears prayers and transmits them to the gods, while on the other hand more and more material from this period is found in which animals, effigies (*Götterbilder, volkstümlich verehrte) and deified humans⁶ act as intermediary.

Since the 18th dynasty the *Apis bull is called intermediary (*whmw* = *Herold) of *Ptah, and the *Mnevis bull intermediary of *Re as terrestrial representatives of their god, and perhaps because they vouchsafed oracles⁷. In egyptological studies sacred animals are explained as intermediaries of gods⁸. Animals whose mummification in the Late Period made them an *Osiris were thought to transmit prayers of supplication or thanks as an intermediary⁹. In this, popular religion is not in conflict with the official religion of the state where the pharaoh functions as intermediary. Upon some of the so-called intermediary statues¹⁰ (Mittlerstatuen) set up in the forecourt of a temple to transmit, on receipt of an offering, prayers to the god or goddess of the temple who was beyond human reach, an inscription explicitly states that they were given by the king as intermediaries: "You who are coming to Thebes downstream and upstream in order to implore the lord of the gods, come to me! I transmit (*smj*) your words to Amun in Karnak. Give me an offering and pour a libation for me. I am an intermediary (*whmw*) nominated by the king to hear the requests of the suppliant, to report (*r s'rt*) the desires of Egypt"¹¹.

It must be borne in mind that the high priest of a temple or any senior priest whom the Greeks later significantly named *prophetes* and not *hiereus*, could function as intermediary in the king's name and could give and expound a divine oracle. Since Ramesside times this special task is sometimes indicated by the title of Mediator-priest (*hm ntr whm* = ,berichtender Gottesdiener')¹².

¹ Goldammer, in: RGG³ IV, Sp. 1063: „Name und Begriff des Mittlers sind verblaßt, unscharf, unkonkret ... Die Sache dagegen liegt im Wesen der Religion und ist uralt und weitverbreitet.“ – ² Hornung, *Der Eine*, 124. –

³ Mircea Eliade, *Traité d'histoire des religions*, Paris

1949, 373. – ⁴ CT IV, 173 f–g; Eberhard Otto, *Gott und Mensch*, SHAW 1964, 12. – ⁵ Kákosy, in: ZÄS 100, 1973, 35–41. – ⁶ E. Otto, in: ZÄS 78, 1943, 28–40; *Wildung, Rolle äg. Könige I*, 74 Anm. 1 (lit.); Dietrich *Wildung, Egyptian Saints*, New York 1977; Quaegebeur, in: *Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica* 8, 1977, 129–145. – ⁷ Erman, in: SDAW 45, 1916, 1147 ff.; William B. Kristensen, *De goddelijke heraut en het woord van God*, in: *Verzamelde bijdragen tot de kennis van de antieke godsdiensten*, Amsterdam 1947, 125–149; Eberhard Otto, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Stierkulte*, UGAÄ 13, Leipzig 1938, 25 f. – ⁸ RÄRG, 823. – ⁹ Hornung, in: StG 20, 1967, 72. 75. – ¹⁰ Helck, *Militärführer*, 12 f.; E. Otto, in: Or 17, 1948, 466; Clère, in: JEA 54, 1968, 135–148, esp. 143 (lit.); Siegfried Schott, *Altäg. Liebeslieder*, Zürich 1950, 81 f. – ¹¹ Urk. IV, 1833, 13–19. – ¹² Kees, in: ZÄS 85, 1960, 138–143.

H. te V.