An approach first explicitly evident in Meyer’s monumental 1909 Geschichte des Altn. Papyrus Westcar has been persistently

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1. E. Meyer, Geschichte des Altn. (M. As 26), Munchen – Berlin 1909, 205. He feels that, even if Westcar represents the first three kings of Dyn 5 as ingrates of the sun god, this must reflect a later view; “aber trotzdem enthält diese Sage schon historisch völlig richtigen Kern.” This specific positive result from the methodological assumptions set forth at ibid., 24–25: “In diesen Erzählungen [der völksstümlichen Literatur] sind die geschichtlichen Tatsachen noch erkennbar; aber sie sind zu Geschichten geworden und mit populären Stoffen, Mienen und Wundern verknüpft, und gehen oft weit mehr der Märchenliteratur an.” But such works are not only of the highest value in revealing the thought and the understanding they had of “geschichtlichen Leben,” but “sie kann und muß auch kritisch als eine Quelle für die geschichtlichen Taten zu Grunde liegender Tatsachen benutzt werden.” A world turns on the word “kritisch.”

2. As by S. Schott, Mythe und Mönchbildung im Alten Ägypten (UGAA IS), Leipzig 1945, 179: “Wir wissen von der 5. Dynastie genau, um in der Sprache des Märchens die historische Wahrheit zu erlachen.” W. S. Smith 1971 “The Old Kingdom in Egypt and the Beginning of the First Intermediate Period” in CAH 1/2, 179: “No explanation of the position of Khentkaues can be made to fit exactly with the tale in the Westcar Papyrus. Nevertheless the story evidence reflects elements of the true facts.” H. Altenmüller 1970 “Die Stellung der Königsmonarchie Chensous im Übergang von der 5. zur 6. Dynastie” in CAH 45, 90, p. 227: “Ein Neubesinnung für die Untersuchung des Chensousproblems ergibt sich durch eine positive Wertung der Erzählungen des Papyrus Westcar.” M. Moursi, Die Hofepigrafie des Sonnengottes von der Frühzeit Ägyptens bis zum Ende des Neuen Reiches (MAS 20), München – Berlin 1972, treated as exhibiting an “historisch völlig richtigen Kern,” as representing a “Widerspiegelung der realen Vorgänge” from Dyn 4 to 5. This has been done even in the face of the tale’s fabulous elements— when these are mentioned, it is only in order to dismiss them from the equation of a historical inquiry. At this approach eschews’ despite protestations made in passing by Goedicke recently in this journal, there are grounds for a concentrated inquiry into the text’s worth as a historical base. For my own part, even after having set its wonders aside, I

160. “Wenn auch diese Geschichte in den Rahmen einer Mächtenerzählung gehört, so scheint sie doch ein besseres Wort zu Grunde zu liegen.” W. Bara, Untersuchungen zur Geschichtlichkeit des regierenden Königs (MAS 32), München – Berlin 1975, though cautioning that the document’s historical worth should not be overstressed because of disparity between the figures of Khentkaues und Ruđudjet (p. 29), nevertheless takes it as evidence for the “Existenz eines Geburtsrituals ... für die Zeit des Alten Reiches” (p. 19). And Westcar is yet drawn upon in introductory histories of Egypt without explicit evaluation of the document’s historical worth, as in N. Grimal, A History of Ancient Egypt, 1. Shaw tr., Oxford 1992, esp. 70–77.

4. R. Gundlach, Der Pharao und sein Staat. Die Grundlagen der ägyptischen Königswissenschaft im 4. und 3. Jahrtausend, Darmstadt 1998, 247: he holds that, although composed about six centuries after the events it recounts, and though preserved only in a still later manuscript, “wir können vermuten, daß sie eine Widerspiegelung der realen Vorgänge darstellt.”

3. Gundlach 1998, 248: “Wenn wir die märchenhaften Elemente einmal beiseite lassen, können folgende königswissenschaftlichen Aspekte aufgelöst werden,” with the points following. There is no question that the work is of utmost importance as a source for ideological history, but it remains to be illustrated that Westcar is a reliable source for the study of the ideological history of the OK, rather than the period in which it was composed.

See the two preceding notes.

5. See H. Goedicke 1993 “Thoughts about the Papyrus Westcar” in ZAS 129, 32.
would urge that the text comes up short when approached for its historical content, but that, on the contrary, it can be prized when approached as a literary work.

As typically understood, when exhibiting a kernel of historical truth pertaining to the rise of a sun cult to predominance in Dynasty 5, and this rise is supposed to be evident in Old Kingdom data. As to the latter, usually advanced are the frequency of use of the title "Son of Re" in Dynasty 5, and the advent of sun temples with Userkaf, first king of the same. These, then, are two phenomena worthy of inspection.

1 Application is the novel interpretation of H. Lefrançais 1998 "The Papyrus Westcar" in SAK 25, 113–140, who sees it directly reflecting historical circumstances of Dyn 12, specifically concerning the congregation of Amarna 1 and Senwosret 1 on this, see n. 52 below.


3 Dyn 5 entries of the Annals Stone are sometimes advanced as another knob of the sun god's rise (e.g. Schott 1945, 15–16; S. Schott 1950 "Bemerkungen zum ägyptischen Pyramidentext" in Beiträge Bf 5, 148; and W. S. Smith 1971, 180 (evidently following Schott), on the basis of a relatively greater allocation of material wealth to the sun god, and the "Myth of Heliopolis" at the beginning of Dyn 5, it is at the same time aware that "Der als Beiname schon zum agyptischen Pyramidenkult" in Beitriige Bf 5, 148; Schott und Privatleuten im Museum von Kairo Ne 1-1294, 1, dates this item to Dyn 4 for the Cairo catalog (see J. O. 1982, 70; W. S. Smith 1971, 180; and J. Assmann 1982, 30).

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Three kings immediately following Khufu made use of the title "Son of Re," the earliest being Djedefre, according to the reconstruction of a handful of fragments surfacing in Munich in 1901. The reconstruction was secured through comparison of the fragments is an inscription from one of a pair of diorite statues of Khafre, calling him ktr wn-ib hs3-fjt3 h3-nfr ss r3-fjt3 nb3-fr3[n]w "Horus Userkaf Khafre, the good Horus, the good god, the Son of Re, lord of appearances." The third king attested as bearing the title is Menkaure, with a cylinder seal reading mh-k3-wn-3-fr3[1] nb-nfr-wr3 nb "Menkaure, Son of Re, beloved of the gods every day." With these second two, one notes how zfr3 does not appear before the king's name, but is appended to it as an appositive. This practice occurs in Dynasty 5 as well. Sahure, second king of Dynasty 5, but the first, to my knowledge, of the dynasty attested with the honorific, has an inscription calling him sJ-fz.w-zfr3[2] "Sahure, the Son of Re." After him, the next king of Dynasty 5 attested bearing the honorific is Niuserre, as he is called nJ-wr3-zfr3 mni-w3dgh "Niuserre, son of Re, beloved of
Wadjit\(^{17}\). After Sahure and Neuserre, to my knowledge the title does not appear again until Izeti\(^{18}\) and Wenis, the last two kings of the dynasty, and two who did not build sun temples.

The pattern of an inscription is illuminating: of the six kings believed to have built sun temples\(^{19}\), only Sahure\(^{18}\) and Neuserre\(^{20}\) are attested as "Sons of Re," which suggests that the phenomenon "Son of Re" was not directly connected to the sun temples. Moreover, the hon- orific's attested usage in Dynasty 5 is infrequent in comparison to that of Dynasty 4, with three out of four kings after Khufu bearing it. Indeed, its appearance in the middle of Dynasty 4 in direct contact with the names of kings suggests that the notion conveyed by it had already become an integral element of royal ideology\(^{21}\). With the king designated as king through being called son of the sun god\(^{22}\), Re was evidently already of paramount importance to the state in Dynasty 4.

Also added to illustrate a rise of the sun god's prominence in Dynasty 5 is the advent of the sun temples. There is so doubt that these were fundamentally bound up with the sun god\(^{23}\), because the names of the structures in question are uniformly constructed with the element \(r'\): thus \(nbn-r'\) "Fortress of Re," \(nbn-a\) "Field of Re," and so on. The arrival of new monuments with an explicit solar connection\(^{24}\).

\(^{17}\) See A. H. Gardiner and T. Eric Peet, The Inscriptions of Sinai, London 1932, pl. 6 (and revue Urk 1,34, 2).

\(^{18}\) Although both H. Müller 1938, 70, and J. von Beckerath, Handbuch der ägyptischen Königsnamen (MAS 49), Mainz 1999, 26, with n. 2, question the certainty of dating of one attestation of izeti with \(z\)-\(r'\), perhaps stemming from the MK, there remains another of neuserre's (ibid). See H. Müller 1938, 70, fig. 108.

\(^{19}\) Five of the six documented sun temples may be associated with specific kings, and the assignment of the sixth is debatable; see W. Kaiser 1956 "Zu den Sonnenheilig tümern des 5. Dynastie" in MDAIK 14, 105–106.

\(^{20}\) As at Urk 1169, 8.

\(^{21}\) As at Urk 1,53, 18–54, 2.

\(^{22}\) This conclusion finds further support in the royal naming practices of Dynasty 4. Beginning with the children of Snefru, it was a common practice to compound personal names with the element \(r'\) as a practice exclusive to members of the royal family before the transition to Dynasty 5. For the social distribution of \(r'\)-names in Dynasty 4, see B. Begelsbacher-Fischer, Umsuchungen zur Gött erwelt des Al ten Reiches im Spiegel der Namensbildung, Freiburg 1981, 105–106.

\(^{23}\) For citations, see K. Sethe 1889 "Die Heiligtümer des Re" im alten Reich" in ZÄS 27, 111, and Begelsbacher-Fischer 1981, 168–169.

\(^{24}\) Despite the powerful solar connection, it is important to recognize that these were not simply temples devoted exclusively to the sun god, as Winter 1957, 228 observes. In the Annals Stone mention is made of \(ml.t-n\) \(nbn-r'\) "the gods of the Fortress of Re" (Urk 1244, 7) in the Annals, and even a \(b-nb-hr\) \(nbn-r'\) "god-serveur of Horus of the Fortress of Re." (A. Mariette, Les Mastabas de l'ancien empire. Frag...
in Dynasty 5 serves to suggest that the significance of the sun god was indeed reaching into new dimensions.

But to precisely fix this significance within the context of history is difficult, because the so-called "Harmakhis temple," built at the feet of the Giza sphinx during the reign of Khafu or Khafre, is understood by many to itself be a sun temple. If this surmise is correct, then the sun cult was already intimately bound up with the king and his mortuary monuments well before Dynasty 5. But this is only a variation of the conclusion drawn above.

To turn to the Dynasty 5 sun temples themselves, the connections between them and the pyramids are so strong as to suggest that the two were akin in function—officials and priests in the sun temples tended also to be priests in the pyramids of their associated kings; and the sun temples are positioned on the western edge of the desert, like the pyramids and in close proximity to them; and, while divine temples of the Old Kingdom were apparently built of mud-brick, the sun temples, like the pyramids, were built of stone. Since the sun temples were tightly linked to the pyramids in situation and in practical affairs, it is no big step to go on to regard them as monuments of significance to the next life—as mortuary monuments, or, better said, as Königsenkämmerer, the "term applied them by Winter." 29

As fully justifiable as the term "sun temple" is, this other term "royal monument" is also much justified, not only for the connections mentioned just now, but also because of the inscriptional evidence, especially the Sed festival fragments from Niuserre's sun temple. 30 Having to do with features of the royal cult extending back at least to predynastic times, these serve to bind monument and associated king to ancestral traditions of kingship. Thus linking a Dynasty 5 king to past kings, these relics serve in part as proclamation of legitimacy through

29 Stadelmann, Die ägyptischen Pyramiden. Vom Ziegelbau zum Weltwunder, Mainz 1997, 163; Kaiser 1956, 114, with the same observation.


31 Which fragments provide a further connection between the sun temples and the pyramids, since Sed festival representations appear also in the decorative program of pyramids, as noted by M. Rochholz 1994 "Sefer, Sonnenheiligtum und Pyramidenbezirk. Zur Darstellung der Grabansätze der Könige der 5. und 6. Dynastie" in R. Gundlach and M. Rochholz, eds., Ägyptische Tempel - Struktur, Funktion und Praxen (HAB 37), 255 and 259 n 20 for some citations.

32 As a scene from it is depicted on the Narmer mace-head; see J. E. Quibell, Hierakonpolis Part I (ERA 4), London 1989, pl. 26B.

33 See Winter 1957, 227. Kaiser 1956, 105, translates that over 3/4s of the 50 sun temple officials studied by him also served in royal mortuary cult. Administrative posts of contact are indicated also by the Abusir pa­pys, as they record deliveries of provisions of the pyramid of Nebirkare from his sun temple, made twice daily by boat on a canal; as reported by I. E. S. Edwards, The Pyramids of Egypt, London 1993, 136.

34 Kaiser 1956, 113, and Winter 1957, 222.

continuity with the past. This is not a clean break with tradition, but a re-invention of it. All of these reasons combine to point to the correctness of perceiving these temples as "royal monuments," and in this their practical, political function may be seen in part to be an expression of legitimacy. As such, a sun temple’s practical purpose matched that of the pyramids, making up in innovative form for what the Dynasty 5 kings were perhaps economically incapable of accomplishing in size.

To tie all of this together, the contemporary evidence does not paint a clear picture of Dynasty 5 kings being more solar in character than kings of Dynasty 4. Rather, the evidence permits one to frame more forcefully a view-point common to Kees, Anthes, and Ed-Duward. As the sun god as father of the king (As to the striking architectural feature of the obelisk, it seems to have appeared as an original component only with the third sun temple, Neferirkare’s, the earlier sun temples being modified thereafter; see Kaiser 1956, 109–111).

Here, the monuments are interpreted from the point of view of their place in respect to maintenance of social hierarchy, i.e. power and ideology, but this is not to say that they cannot also be understood as symbolic expressions pertinent to other dimensions of human experience, as they also can and should be.

Adopting the view of G. Reisner, Mycenae: The Temples of the Third Pyramid at Giza, Cambridge 1931, 254, as to the Comparative degree of wealth of the kings of Dyn 5; from a different point of view, his assertion may be seen as complementary to the conclusions of N. Kornev. Great Pyramid Administration in the Old Kingdom, Warminster 1977, who would like to see a general tendency toward economic decline through the course of the OK. An alternative explanation for the inferior site (and quality) of post-Dyn 5 pyramids might be sought after in changes of taste or in some other undocumented phenomenon. See Anthes 1971, 56–57. With him, indications of a rise of the sun cult to him includes the compositing of royal names with Re beginning with Dyn 4 onwards; Neferyirkare’s, the earlier sun temples being modified thereafter; see Kaiser 1956, 109–111.

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kings will intervene between Khufu’s reign and the first king of Dynasty 5. Meanwhile, however, an Old Kingdom inscription listing kings from Djedefre through Sahure agree with the New Kingdom Abydos kings in number, sequence, and name. These show four kings between Khufu and the first king of Dynasty 5; pWestcar shows two. The second but most obvious deviation from historical fact is the spellings of the names of two of the first three kings of Dynasty 5. There are enough points of contact to be sure that pWestcar’s wr-r-f “Userkaf” is in parallel to the historical wr-kk-f “Userkaf,” and the same may be said for the third child of pWestcar, ðw “Keku” whose name much varies from the historical k-k-r-f “Kakai”. The alterations are easily understood as cases of artistic license; then historical accuracy has been set aside for the sake of literary meaning, and, in so doing, the author sets his tale outside of historical time into a time out of time.

So one has deviation from historical facts in sequence of kings and in alteration of names. One suspects by such significant variations that faithfulness to historical detail was not one of the author’s aims. And this is of utmost importance from our perspective, for...
one may induce that the work as a whole was not intended to be a historically reliable docu­ment.

As the historical reliability of pWestcar has now just been called into question, one may wonder whether the text itself has anything to give by way of answer. It does. In part of whole, the tale contains within itself three stories about magicians told to Khufu by his sons. At the end of each, the king provides a memorial to the magician, saying, lw m3.n apf n(y) r ‘I have seen his deed of knowledge’ 55. But of course he has not actually seen any deeds; he has only been told about them. This distinction between actu­ally witnessing an event and only hearing a re­port of an event is what a fourth son, Hardjedef, plays upon when it is his turn to tell a tale. Of this r.h.3 n(y) rw3t [r] r.h.n tw mf.w [r] r grg [lw wn hr] h3.k m h.tw .gk-k ‘knowledge of those of the past’ 56, he says, ‘one can[n]t learn of (their) truth as opposed to (their) false­hood. [But there is one under] Your Majesty in your own time’, someone who can perform wonders for Khufu right now. The sense of the passage is clear: the preceding brothers told stories about past magicians allegedly perform­ing wonders, whereas Hardjedef will summon a magician to actually perform a wonder right before Khufu’s eyes. Here and elsewhere the tale indeed shows itself to be ‘a narrative about true and false things’, 57, for, casting into doubt the veracity of recounted events, pWestcar enters into self-reflexive questioning of its own verac­ity: how can we see that recounted events actu­ally happened? By putting this conundrum on our plate, the text is putting itself in a position of being an authoritative account of the past, but exactly the reverse.

With this in mind, and recalling its artful al­teration of the names of historical figures, there is good reason to approach it as a literary rather than a historical work.

Then one may consider its position within Egyptian literature. The device of having a wise commoner (ndjw) making a prophecy before a Dynasty 4 king, and the content of the proph­ecy, that the new rulers of pWestcar are to be of humble origins, puts it in direct contact with the Prophecy of Neferti 58, a work likewise locat­ed

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54 West 6,20, by which 4,16-17, and 1,16, may be restored.

52 West 6,21, by which 4,16-17, and 1,16, may be restored.

56 Lit. ‘those who have passed (on).’

57 West 6,23–24.

58 See Weste 6,20: lw n(y)t n[m]j ... There is a commoner ...’ and Neferti (KAT 3) 1le: n[m]j pw ... ‘He is a commoner ...’

59 Already observed by J. Spiegel, ‘Gotterge­bärte’ n4:i n yw n(y) mdw.t nlr.t {s.w stp.w 4Jy Ijr n(y) rb.t n(y) rb.n tw m3C’. [wt] r

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56 Similarly, R. B. Parkinson, ‘Teachings, Dis­courses and Tales’ in S. Quirke, ed., Middle Kingdom Studies, New Malden 1991,98.

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able in the Middle Kingdom milieu. Presumably composed in the same era, the common presence of this device suggests that it appears in *pWestcar* precisely because of its contemporary appeal — for a goal of fiction is not only to teach, but also to please.

But fiction does teach, and so one would like to hunt down the text's message. It will be tied to the very device mentioned just now, for the crux of the text is in the birth and world-coming of divine kings stemming from a common family.


2/2 As Assmann 1982, 29, has noted. In respect to the text's central event, it may be observed that H. Jenner 1998, 113–144 interprets the text by the assumption that the decorative sense of the text ("die Szenenbene") is to be pseudonymously and allonymously interpreted wholesale as a kind of propagandistic reconciliation with a hostile but "nicht genauer bestimmten Gruppe von Personen" (see ibid., 119) founded specifically on special historical affairs of Dyn 12, as when it is suggested that Udjat's reattachment of the heads of three animals may represent Senwosret I's reconciliation with a hostile but "nicht genau genannter bestimmter Gruppe von Personen" (see ibid., 122–123); the text is interpreted wholesale as a kind of propaganda, with a ci cle if what is ultimately another attempt to read history from fiction. But the sought-after explanatory effect of the assumption dissipates, at least for me, when a connection is forced between the divine filiation of the common children of Ruddjedet and the source of legitimacy of those who did not have it by birth. Besides this, there are fundamental methodological considerations of the sort mentioned by S. Quirke.

Now, the significance of this crux cannot be found by interpreting *pWestcar* as showing the advent of a sun cult through the elevation of a new line of sun kings, for then the first three stories embedded in *pWestcar* might as well have been left out: what difference would it make to supposed sun kings if Nebka is perhaps diverted from going to the temple of Ptah in the interests of being spectator to a secular wonder instead, or if Khufu is portrayed as spending his time listening to idle tales?

Rather, if the story is to be read as a coherent whole, then how all of the old kings are char-
actORIZED has to be put in relation to the new line. The former are depicted as serving themselves through the pursuit of secular entertain-

1982, 30; Bruneau 1986, 205; Parkinson 1997, 104; and Gundlach 1998, 248. On a related matter, it is not clear to me that Snefru is being portrayed as a “good king” put in contrast to Khufu as one less so. To judge from Posner 1956, 12; D. Wildung, Die Rolle der Könige im Bewusstsein ihrer Nachwelt (MÄS 17), Berlin 1969, 116; and S. Morenz 1971 “Traditionen um Cheops” in ZÄS 97, 114, (with them being followed by M. Baud 1998 “Une épithète de Redjedef et la prétendue tyrannie de Cheops. Études sur la statuaire de Redjedef, II” in BIFAO 98, 25 with n. 55), the evidence for the contrast would seem to reside principally in Snefru’s calling Djadjemankh “my brother” (Westc. 6.1) and Khufu’s allegedly calling Dyhdjebti “my servant” (Westc. 9.16). But the latter passage is problematic. If biit-l is taken as a noun, then the remainder of the statement requires amendment for it to be intelligible: (perhaps) biit-l in ni st 3 ti dtr “I or my servant, myself I (would?) have traversed (to?) her.” While the i. c. s. pronoun is elsewhere frequently sus-
cceptible to deletion, it is nowhere deleted in pWestcar, except perhaps in this passage alone. Also, taking it in this manner requires one to attribute a subjective rather than indicative value to the action indicated by the verb (because of the context in which the statement appears), but such a value for the s4m.n-fis is not known to me outside of this passage. If, on the other hand, biit-l is taken as a verb, as by O. El-Agzy 1997, 163, then the text need not be amended: (perhaps) biit-l in st dtr “I should carry out a *trip to her myself ….” But then biit-l takes an infinitive as object, which would be a combination unknown to me from other sources. Also, though the 3. f. s. dative may be written as ni-st in Rameside documents (e.g. LES 1 p. 6, 15–14: “Wepl for dr ni-st; and then he said to her ….”), such an instance is not known to me from before. In sum, there would appear to be no solution to the passage devoid of problems, taking into account in which its interpretation is ultimately uncertain, which entails that the basis for the supposed contrast is likewise uncertain. As for Snefru’s referring to Djadjemankh as ni-st, and this, then, being a manifestation of the king’s “goodness,” R. Goyon 1926 “Notes on Two Egyptian Kings” in JEA 12, 251, a long time ago adduced individual terms such as this one to paint a picture of the MK perception of Snefru as being an egalitarian ruler. But such terms of seeming egalitarianism ought to be considered within the contexts in which they appear. For example, at Neferti (KAT 9.3): i-i-w sn-in k3 n.dj bn-b3k-i “two msw h m wlmw’ djal jm-f3n n3w n-bk. “They then (the courtiers) were upon their bellies again before His Majesty, Jph, and then His Majesty, Jph, said to them, ‘O comrades, ….’” Addressing prostrate courtiers as “comrades” – there is perhaps no irony more superbly rendered in all Egyptian literature – to see how a wax crocodile swallowed up an adulterer2 is to be rowed about upon a lake by beautiful women3, and to listen to tales about magicians. In contrast to these self-interested pursuits, the first of the new kings is to be High Priest in Heliopolis4, an indication that before becoming king he will be in divine service. This notion of service to deity receives full develop-

2 That the crocodile fills itself with the adulterous companion seems to be the sense of Westc. 3.14: “thrown into the water after the crocodile, a wax crocodile grows into a real one, and ‘If a man’s wife pl n4s “It was filled with the fellow.” asked to come see a wonder, Nebka is present when the crocodile later comes forth from the water (3.23–25) and Webansen turn it back into wax (4.3–5).”

3 See Westc. 5.13–14. One could go more deeply into this scene to see that serious ritual for Hathor is being parodied, as suggested in passing by Parkinson 1997, 103–104, and by P. Derchain 1969 “Snefru et ses ramifications” in RE 21, 22–23. Importantly, the latter draws a close parallel between Snefru and his rowers and images of Re as a bark with Hathor, an image played upon in such a way so as to justify the ousting of the old line. Derchain thus seems to induce an inter-

4 For the severed heads, see Westc. 8.17–9.1. complete: to see how a wax crocodile swallowed up an adulterer and to be rowed about upon a lake by beautiful women, and to listen to tales about magicians. In contrast to these self-interested pursuits, the first of the new kings is to be High Priest in Heliopolis, an indication that before becoming king he will be in divine service. This notion of service to deity receives full develop-

5 Note that, according to the line of development traced by Moursi 1973, 154, the title of Snefru is “portrayed as the advocate of order and goodness,” but that his deeds lack social consequence.
ment when Re tells Isis, Nephthys, Meskhenefer, Hepat, and Chnum that for them the new kings will build temples, and that their altars will be endowed, their offering tables abundantly provided for, and their divine offerings multiplied — all by the new kings 7. Thus, while no statement in the text promises a golden age for the sun cult 72, these promises show that there is to be a special relationship between the new kings and cult in general, for proper service is promised to a multiplicity of gods, not just to one.

There is more. The contrast just mentioned is in parallel to the difference between the kinds of wonders performed by the priests as opposed to the one performed by the gods. With Nebka, Snefru, and Khufu, the wonders prepared by the priests are frivolous unrelated to the business of the state — performed to vengefully settle a domestic dispute 7, performed to rescue the bauble of a royal mistress 75, and performed for the amusement of the king. In contrast, the single wonder for the new kings is of utmost seriousness: as the source of the new line's legitimacy is its filial relationship to the sun god, the wonder the gods prepare for the new kings is something which will demonstrate this relationship 76: Isis said to these gods, 77

"Why have we returned without making a wonder for the children, so that we might inform their father of the one who caused that we come?"

They fashioned three crowns of the lord, lhp. With them, a wonder is not made for entertainment, but rather concerns the direction of the state; it is a divine proof of their legitimacy. In sum, as literary meaning is created through difference, the point of the text emerges from the contrast drawn between the old line, frivolous and self-serving, and a new line, serious and properly in service to the gods 78. Thus, if there is

71 Westc.9,24-26:

\[\text{brd J nty m b.t-s}  \\
\text{nty r ir.t B.wt twy mn.b.wt m tj pn r rjr-/}  \\
\text{qd-sn d.w-pr.w-tn}  \\
\text{srj-fl-sn !;j.wt-tn}  \\
\text{swsrj.w-sn wrj.w-tn}  \\
\text{srjy-sn btp.w-ntr-tn}\]

these three children who are in her womb who will exercise this worthy office in this whole land, that they may build your temples, endow your altars, abundantly provide your offering-tables, and multiply your divine offerings.

72 Contra Schott 1945, 17.

71 So already A. Erman, Die Marchen des Papyrus Westcar, Berlin 1890, 20. (He continues, "die Konigsfamilie vergass eben auch auf dem Throne nicht die Verehrung des Sonnengottes, die in ihrem Hause von Alters her erblich war. Es war ein frommes priesterliches Geschlecht und auch die Grossen ihres Hofes rühmen sich ja Priester an diesen koniglichen Sonntempeln gewesen zu sein.")

73 The wife of the priest Webainer apparently has an affair with the commoner (Westc. 2,5-9), and apparently it is for the purposes of revenge for this that the priest seems to fashion a wax crocodile (2,22-24), which the priest's flunky then throws into the water after the commoner (3,12-13), whereupon the wax crocodile becomes a real one and apparently swallows the commoner (3,13-14).

Westc. 6,7-10.

74 Weste. 11,10-13:

\[\text{bB.t lr.n rb.n Js.t n nn ntr.w}  \\
\text{pty nj nt(y)t n iy.wyn r-s}  \\
\text{nn ir.t bB.t n nJ n(y) brd.w}  \\
\text{smi-n n} \]

Westc. 11,10-13:

\[\text{bB.t lr.n rb.n Js.t n nn ntr.w}  \\
\text{pty nj nt(y)t n iy.wyn r-s}  \\
\text{nn ir.t bB.t n nJ n(y) brd.w}  \\
\text{smi-n n}\]

80 Lit. "bore" (ms!), as is common with the production of cult images (e.g. already in the OK, Urk 239,13), a choice of word denoting the production of an item, but here also connoting the real birthing recently done.

81 Westc.11,10-13:

\[\text{bB.t lr.n rb.n Js.t n nn ntr.w}  \\
\text{pty nj nt(y)t n iy.wyn r-s}  \\
\text{nn ir.t bB.t n nJ n(y) brd.w}  \\
\text{smi-n n}\]

82 Other contrasts may be drawn out, e.g. the contrastive associations of images of splendor. In the story of Nebka, the priest Webainer is in the possession of an object of \[\text{hbny} [\text{br rjr m w}] \]

"ebony [and electrum]" (Westc. 2,21-22) and Snefru's beauties are equipped with \[\text{pr-nt myi(y) n hwyyn r-s}  \\
\text{mr bB.t r ni(m) jf bj dw}\]

"twenty ebony oars worked in gold, the grips thereof of seqeb-wood worked in electrum" (Weste. 5,7-9) and Khufu's son Hardjedef has a carrying chair of \[\text{hbny nbj.w m ssnrjm}\]

"ebony, (its) carrying poles of sesnedjem-wood" (Westc. 7,12-13). With each of the pre-Dyn 5 kings, precious substances are always the constituent elements of objects remote from the king — particularly modes of conveyance. In stark contrast, the imagery of finery associated with the Dyn 5 kings is entirely confined to their persons. With each, \[\text{nhbl}\]
to be a reason for the introduction of a new line of kings, then it may be found right in this opposition. The problem, a religious one, self-interested; its solution, piety.

In conclusion, so long as the text is approached as a coherent whole, its underlying point is not to give a historical account of the rise of a line of sun kings in Dynasty 5, which in any event took place already in Dynasty 4. Nor, for that matter, can it be reasonably said that the work was written conscientiously as a history, but the artistic play and themes of the work can indeed be appreciated when the text is approached for what it is - a literary work. And as such, its point matches what may be found in the Prophecy of Neferti: there is trouble in the state; change in rule resolves it. Possessing this theme, the tale would have appealed to an audience which was eager for such a change, and the theme's presence in the text may be understood in precisely this light - as a work more reflective of concerns of the time in which it was written than of the mythical days of the Old Kingdom.

SUMMARY

As it has been claimed that pWestcar reflects the rise of a sun cult to prominence in Dynasty 5, this article begins by examining the evidence contemporaneous to Dynasty 4 and 5, and by this it is shown that the sun cult was already prominent in Dynasty 4, and that, therefore, if pWestcar depicted such a rise, then its depiction would be an ahistorical one. Next, evidence within pWestcar is compared to evidence from Dynasty 4 and 5 to show that, in at least two places, the author sacrificed historical accuracy for literary beauty, with the ramification that the work was not written as a conscientious history. Finally, the work is examined as a literary piece to see whether its meaning involved the presentation of an account of the rise of a sun cult in Dynasty 5, and it is found that, from a literary point of view, this is not the case. Rather, the work was intended to describe a situation where there is trouble in the state in respect to the attitude of its kings, but that piety - manifest in the devotion of a new royal line to cult in general - will resolve it. It is suggested that these points, which are painted through literary oppositions, had indirect inspiration in the social and cultural context of the time in which the work was written.