(Dis)Order in the Court: Sanctioned Dishonesty in the Hall of Two Maats

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Ancient Egypt has provided modern scholarship with some of the earliest extant records of a highly developed conception of judgment after death. A form of post-mortem judgment was present as far back as the Old Kingdom, beginning in the third millennium BCE.[1] The codification of the judgement of the dead did not appear until the fifteenth century BCE in the *Book of Going Forth by Day*, the primary funerary literature of the New Kingdom.[2] The core of the judgment scene was the Weighing of the Heart ritual. The *Book of Going Forth by Day*, more commonly known today as the *Book of the Dead*,[3] contains spells

1. For further discussion see Martin A. Stadler, "Judgment after Death (Negative Confession)," in *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology*, ed. Jacco Dieleman and Willeke Wendrich (Los Angeles: eScholarship, 2008), http://digital2.library.
ucla.edu/viewItem.do?ark=21198/zz000s3mg4.
2. Jan Assmann, "Death as Enemy," in *Death and Salvation in Ancient Egypt*, trans. David Lorton (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005), 79.
3. The *Book of Going Forth by Day* was the original name of this collection of texts. The name *Book of the Dead* was the name given to this collection by nineteenth century German scholars who referred to it as such in their works, culminating in Carl Richard Lepsius, *Das Todtenbuch Der Ägypter Nach Dem Hieroglyphischen Papyrus in Turin. Mit Einem Vorworte Zum Ersten Male Herausgegeben Von R. Lepsius.* lxxix (Leipzig: Wigand, 1842).

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that address the judgment process.[4] Chapter 125 – specifically the second Declaration of Innocence section – and Chapter 30B,[5] are the two spells that most directly impacted this ritual.[6] They were meant to ensure that the deceased passed judgment and entered the afterlife proper. They were, in essence, methods to work around the uncertainties and obstacles of a divine justice system which was dictated by divine order, referred to as Maat.[7] This article will show that the substantial use of magical means to ensure a triumphant result in the judgment halls reflects the relentless desire to secure a successful passage into the afterlife.

While the breadth of funerary literature in circulation in ancient Egypt was vast, the *Pyramid Texts*[8], the *Coffin Texts*[9], and the *Book of Going Forth by Day* were perhaps the most common. Apart from chronology, the main characteristic separating the *Pyramid Texts*, the *Coffin Texts* and the *Book of Going Forth by Day* is how they were implemented, as there is significant crossover between their content. In the period scholars now call the Old Kingdom, both royalty and the elite had access to the *Pyramid Texts*. For royalty, spells were written on the interior of the pyramid walls,

4. Many more books of the afterlife have been found. They became especially diverse during the New Kingdom and in subsequent periods. See Erik Hornung, *The Ancient Egyptian Books of the Afterlife,* trans. David Lorton (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999).
5. Chapter 30B is often referred to as Spell 30B. However, in this article it will be referred to as Chapter 30B to follow the conventions established by E. A. Wallis Budge and followed by Raymond O. Faulkner and Ogden Goelet in the modern translation I am using (see footnote 13 for full citation).
6. There are two Declarations of Innocence sections in Chapter 125. Only the second section, in which the forty-two judges are individually addressed, will be explored in this article.
7. The article will hence forth use the term "Maat" to designate the divine order as is the custom in Egyptological scholarship.
8. The main source of mortuary religion in the Old Kingdom.
9. The main source of mortuary religion in the Middle Kingdom.

which only royalty could afford. However, *Pyramid Text* spells have been found on non-royal tomb walls and other objects dating from the same period.[10] Non-royals did possess a place in the afterlife; however, it has been hotly debated what kind of afterlife they would have enjoyed. While scholars such as J. P. Allen argue that non-royals would have held essentially the same position they did during their time on earth, others, such as Mark Smith, contend that they would have had access to largely the same afterlife as the king.[11] After the collapse of central power that began with what modern scholars refer to as the First Intermediate Period, the use of mortuary inscriptions by royalty and non-royalty alike continued. There was a shift away from inscribing the tomb walls towards a stronger usage of the developing corpus known as the *Coffin Texts*. Many spells of the *Pyramid Texts* overlapped with the *Coffin Texts.* The corpus changed by the addition of new spells and the reinterpretation of old ones.[12] The *Coffin Texts* have been primarily found inscribed on coffins, hence their name.[13]

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10. Mark Smith, "Democratization of the Afterlife," in *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology*, ed. Jacco Dieleman, Willeke Wendrich (Los Angeles: eScholarship 2009), 9, https://escholarship.org/uc/item/70g428wj.

11. See J. P. Allen, "Some Aspects of the Non-Royal Afterlife in the Old Kingdom," in *The Old Kingdom Art and Archaeology: Proceedings of the Conference Held in Prague, May 31– June 4, 2004* ed. M. Bárta, (Prague: Czech Inst. of Egyptology, 2006), and Mark Smith, "Democratization of the Afterlife."

12. The transition between these two corpuses was complex and convoluted and will not be addressed further here. For further discussion see Mark Smith's "Democratization of the Afterlife." Furthermore, the *Coffin Texts* were

13. Eva Von Dassow, ed., *The Egyptian Book of the Dead: The Book of Going Forth by Day: Being the Papyrus of Ani (Royal Scribe of the Divine Offerings), Written and Illustrated Circa 1250 B.C.E., by Scribes and Artists Unknown, Including the Balance of Chapters of the Books of the Dead Known As the Theban Recension, Compiled from Ancient Texts, Dating Back to the Roots of Egyptian Civilization*, trans. Raymond O. Faulkner and Ogden Goelet (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2015), 30.

Central power collapsed a second time, at which point Egypt entered the era now designated as the Second Intermediate Period. Egypt was reunited once again, establishing the period now known as the New Kingdom. Early on during the New Kingdom the *Book of Going Forth by Day* replaced the *Coffin Texts*.[14] The primary medium upon which the spells were written changed from wooden coffins to papyrus scrolls.[15] Papyrus was a cheaper material, and as such was more accessible to a wider breadth of the Egyptian population, although it was still largely inaccessible to most of the lower class. This switch of medium, combined with an increased amount of wealth flowing into Egypt,[16] allowed more people to access the funerary literature – and therefore the afterlife.

The idea of post-mortem judgment also evolved as these texts morphed. Ideas of morality and what constituted a moral person in Egyptian society appear as moral affirmations in the *Book of Going Forth by Day*, but were also evident as far back as the Old Kingdom.[17] However, the Old Kingdom had a different conception

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intended for private use by the deceased to equip them with essential knowledge of the afterlife. This was not the intent or purpose of the *Pyramid Texts*. The *Pyramid Texts* were meant as a guide for the journey to the afterlife.

14. A clean and identifiable break between these textual corpuses is unlikely to be found. There was a gradual shift between these two corpuses, however certain spells that scholars have classified as belonging to the *Coffin Text* corpus also have counterparts in the *Book of Going Forth by Day* that are either similar or identical. A detailed discussion of this precise relationship between the *Coffin Text* spell 369 and the *Book of the Dead* Chapter 33 can be found in Wolfram Grajetzki, "Another Early Source for the Book of the Dead: The Second Intermediate Period Burial D 25 at Abydos," *Studien Zur Altägyptischen Kultur* 34 (2006), 211.

15. The switch in medium was not absolute. Although papyrus scrolls gained popularity, spells were still found on coffins, amulets, staves, and other burial equipment.

16. Jeffrey A. Spencer, *Death in Ancient Egypt* (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin Books, 1982), 23.

17. Maulana Karenga, *Maat, the Moral Ideal in Ancient Egypt: A Study in*

of the afterlife than the New Kingdom. Whether or not the king was judged was not clear in the Old Kingdom *Pyramid Texts*. Spells such as PT 309 have pointed to an absence of judgment of the king, while spells such as PT 316 have indicated that the king would have been judged.[18] Some of the moral affirmations that were contained in the *Pyramid Texts* were solely intended to reaffirm the king's righteous behavior. Judgment after death became quite pervasive for both royalty and common persons in the *Book of Going Forth by Day* by the time of the New Kingdom. For both royalty and common people, the judgment scene was the final step in the deceased's journey to join the gods and enter the afterlife from the Old Kingdom onwards.

When a person died they did not automatically enter the afterlife. Their body had to first be prepared, via mummification, and provided with all of the proper funerary equipment.[19] Once the body was delivered to the tomb, its senses were reopened via the Opening of the Mouth ritual.[20] It was at this point that the deceased entered the underworld, called the *Duat*. Here, the deceased had to

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Classical African Ethics (London: Routledge, 2004), 163.

18. A full discussion of the debate regarding the judgment of the king can be found in Gary A. Stilwell, *Conduct and Behavior as Determinants for the Afterlife: A Comparison of the Judgments of the Dead in Ancient Egypt and Ancient Greece* (Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms International, 2002), 198–238.

19. Individuals were buried with vast amounts of funerary equipment, all of which served a specific purpose. However, discussing this is beyond the scope of this paper. For further discussion on artifacts see John H. Taylor's *Journey Through the Afterlife: Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010). For a discussion on amulets see Carol Andrews, *Amulets of Ancient Egypt* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994).

20. The Opening of the Mouth ritual was complex, and its implications and consequences exceed the scope of the present study. For further discussion see Jan Assmann, "The Rites of Opening the Mouth and the Entrance of the Tomb," in *Death and Salvation in Ancient Egypt*, trans. David Lorton (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), 310–329.

traverse and overcome various dangers and challenges to arrive at the Hall of Two Maats (Hall of Two Truths).[21] In this Hall the deceased underwent the Weighing of the Heart ritual to test if they were worthy enough to enter into the afterlife. A person's worthiness was based on their actions while alive and whether these acts were in accordance with the correct path – that is to say, the Maatian path. If the deceased passed this test they were deemed "true-of-voice" and joined the gods. The modern rendering of "true-of-voice" is "vindication" or "vindicated," which appears consistently throughout the *Book of Going Forth by Day.*

The Divine Justice System

The divine justice system presented in the *Book of Going Forth by Day* was thus dictated by Maat, an elastic term generally referring to truth, order, justice, and rightness. Maat was understood as the divine order that created and structured the cosmos; as the unifying force capable of bringing together God, society, nature, and the universe.[22] Leading a life in accordance with Maat was emphasized and praised in numerous mortuary texts including passages that resemble obituaries. [23] Maat's appearance in these

21. Egyptian funerary literature was not canonized. There are many variations of the *Book of Going Forth by Day*, and some copies have the judgment in the Hall of Two Maats taking place immediately after the arrival in the *Duat*, only after which the deceased is able to journey to the Hall of Judgment.
22. Karenga, *Maat, the Moral Ideal in Ancient Egypt*, 10. The capitalization of "God" here and in the following paragraph follows the capitalization used by Karenga – however, I acknowledge this is atypical for this literature; generally "god" is only capitalized if used in combination with a descriptor, such as "the Great God. This is to avoid the monotheistic implications that tend to be associated with "God."
23. Examples from the New Kingdom include the scribe Akhtoy and King Horemheb. For further discussion see Alan Gardiner, *Hieratic Papyri in the British Museum,* 3rd Series, Volume I (London: British Museum, 1935), and

obituaries aids in demonstrating Maat's wide-reaching influence in Egyptian culture. The concept of Maat informs and reflects on acceptable morality – a principle which, as noted above, is tested when the deceased's heart is weighed against the goddess Maat herself, most often taking the form of an ostrich feather. This element becomes quite prevalent in the second Declaration of Innocence, which will be discussed in detail below.

The term "Maat" comes from the verb *mꜣꜥ* which in its transitive form means to guide or "to give things direction."[24] The elasticity of the term "Maat" communicates many different meanings, all of which center on order, justice, truth, and giving life. On a basic level, "Maat is what God loves."[25] In other words, from the perspective of ancient Egyptians, the gods love what is right – that which creates and maintains order – and what is good. They hate *isfet*, which refers to anything that is in opposition to Maat. Thus, the texts encourage behavior that follows the Maatian model. According to extant texts, Maat was at the center of Egyptian morality, and, more generally, was understood as the divine order within society. In his work on Maatian ethics, Maulana Karenga states, "the key point […] is that the practice of Maat is conceived and carried out within the worldview which links the Divine, the natural and the social. These three domains are interrelated, interactive and mutually affective."[26] Maat was thus at the center of how the ancient Egyptians viewed the world, and, accordingly, was present in all areas of Egyptian life. The Maatian ideal is complex, and, as Karenga notes, manifests itself in four different areas:

Kurt Sethe, *Urkunden des ägyptishen Altertums, Abteiling IV, Urkunden der 18.Dynastie Fasc. 1–22* (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1906–1958), 2155.9–2157.19.

24. Karenga, *Maat, the Moral Ideal in Ancient Egypt*, 6.
25. Karenga, *Maat, the Moral Ideal in Ancient Egypt,* 21.
26. Karenga, *Maat, the Moral Ideal in Ancient Egypt,* 10.

> (1) the universal domain in which Maat is "le Tout ordonné," the totality of ordered existence, and represents things in harmony and in place; (2) the political domain in which Maat is justice and in opposition to injustice; (3) the social domain in which the focus is on right relations and duty in the context of community; and (4) the personal domain in which following the rules and principles of Maat, 'is to realize concretely the universal order in oneself; to live in harmony with the ordered whole.'[27]

The political domain heavily associates royalty with legitimization. The presentation of Maat was a routinely held ritual where the king offered Maat to the gods. The purpose of this ritual was to ensure the continuation of the divine order and to legitimize the king's rule, which, in turn, acted to preserve the social and political order in Egypt.

The Weighing of the Heart

The Weighing of the Heart ritual is portrayed in the vignette attached to Chapter 30B[28] of the *Book of Going Forth by Day* in the Papyrus of Ani.[29] This ritual was intended to test whether an individual was "true-of-voice" – i.e., weather they had led a Maatian life. As noted above, an individual's heart was put on one side of the scales, while an embodiment of Maat (often represented in the form of an ostrich) was placed on the other.[30] In some cases, a

27. Karenga, *Maat, the Moral Ideal in Ancient Egypt,* 8.
28. The vignette was often attached to Chapter 125.
29. The *Book of Going Forth by Day* refers to all variations of the funerary literature by that name. Each variation contained a selection of spells and vignettes from a larger list. Some spells – such as Chapter 125 and Chapter 30B – were quite common, while others appeared more rarely. The Papyrus of Ani, which dates back to the Nineteenth Dynasty, was only one of many different versions, but it still remains the most complete book found by archeologists to date.
30. Von Dassow, *The Egyptian Book of The Dead,* 39 [Plate 3].

miniaturized portrayal of her goddess form was placed on the scales.[31] If the deceased's heart balanced against the Maat they were deemed righteous and allowed entry into the afterlife. If their heart did not balance, it was eaten by the "Devourer" – also known as Ammit – a creature with the head of a crocodile, the forelegs of a lion, and the backside of a hippopotamus.[32] When eaten, the deceased experienced a "Second Death."

As also noted above, this second death was permanent – the individual ceased to exist. Erasure from existence was greatly feared, and the widespread use of spells demonstrates the lengths to which the Egyptians went to avoid suffering this fate. This fear is further emphasized in Chapters 44, 46, and 175, all of which address the prevention of death directly.[33] The purpose of burying the spells in the *Book of Going Forth by Day* with the deceased was to provide protection via ritual knowledge.[34] For example, Chapter 32 is one of three spells meant to protect the user from crocodiles,[35] while other spells – such as Chapters 124, 125, 146 and 147 – provided the knowledge required to pass certain challenges.[36] If one came to a guarded door as described in Chapter 147, and the deceased was not able to provide the mystical names of the gates or that of their keepers, the gatekeeper would attack them with knives and snakes,

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31. This iconography became more popular after the New Kingdom. See John H. Taylor's *Journey Through the Afterlife*, 222 [entry 106], 223 [entry 107] and 225 [entry 111].
32. Taylor, *Journey Through the Afterlife*, 213–214.
33. Von Dassow, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead,* 66 and 91 [Plates 16 and 29].
34. For a discussion of this see Jan Assmann, "Death and Initiation in the Funerary Religion of Ancient Egypt," in *Religion and Philosophy in Ancient Egypt,* Yale Egyptological Studies vol. 3, ed. James P. Allen (New Haven: Yale Egyptological Seminar, 1989), 135–59.
35. Von Dassow, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 117.
36. Von Dassow, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 56, 82, and 95 [Plates 11, 24B, and 31].

which, at minimum, prevented the deceased from continuing on their journey, but was more likely to result in their second death.[37] Possession of this knowledge was therefore necessary to complete the journey to the afterlife unimpeded.

Anubis, here referred to as the "Keeper of the Balance," oversaw the Weighing of the Heart ritual, and Thoth, the scribe god, wrote down the verdict on a papyrus scroll. The ritual was performed in the presence of Osiris[38] and the Great Ennead, [39] and it was this set of deities that welcomed the now vindicated deceased into the afterlife. Maat was present in two forms at the Weighing of the Heart; in her personified form on the scales – so as either an ostrich feather or as a seated figure with an ostrich feather on her head – as well as in her abstract form as the embodiment of justice itself. The ritual was performed to judge the deceased according to the principles of Maat, and this, in turn, allowed the deities involved in the judgment to discern whether the deceased had complied with the principles of Maatian justice when they were alive. Their misdeeds would make their heart heavy, upsetting the balance by pulling down the scales.

The divine justice system thus relied and was centered on the principles of Maat. These principles dictated which deeds were considered acceptable and which ones were not, and adherence to these rules determined whether the deceased was worthy. But did the Egyptians take into account human nature? It is safe to say that no human being has ever lived a flawless life. However, perfection was needed to balance against Maat.[40] Would the Egyptian system

37. Francesco Carelli, "The Book of Death: Weighing Your Heart," *London Journal of Primary Care* 4, no. 1 (2011), 86.
38. The god of life, death, and agriculture as well as ruler of the *Duat*.
39. The Ennead is one of the earliest creation narratives.
40. E. A. Wallis Budge, "Osiris as Judge of the Dead," in *Osiris and the Egyptian Resurrection* (London: P. L. Warner, 1911), 334.

of justice allow for minor misdeeds? If a person was generally good and genuinely tried to live their life in accordance with the Maat but committed some minor mistakes, would they still have suffered a fate of possible erasure from existence? Would this possibility have been tolerable to the Egyptians? It will be argued here that the uncertainty of the outcome during the ritual of the Weighing of the Heart is what led Egyptians to incorporate the use of magical spells, specifically those found in Chapter 125 and Chapter 30b, to ensure a positive outcome.[41]

The Magical Means

The first spell to reduce the uncertainty regarding successful passage into the afterlife is Chapter 30B.[42] In the Papyrus of Ani, this spell and the vignette depicting the Weighing of the Heart appear near the beginning of the scroll. The spell is preceded by hymns and prayers to the two most important gods in Egyptian religion: Re and Osiris. The spell reads as follows:

> O my heart which I had from my mother! O my heart which I had from my mother! O my heart of my different ages! Do not stand up as witness against me, do not be opposed to me in the tribunal, do not be hostile to me in the presence of the Keeper of the Balance, for you are my Ka which was in my body, the protector who made my members hale. Go forth to the happy place whereto we speed; do not make my name stink to the Entourage who made men. Do not tell lies about me in the presence of the god; it is indeed well that you should hear![43]

41. A similar argument can be found in Siegfried Morenz's *Egyptian Religion* (Lonton: Routledge, 2004).
42. Von Dassow, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 39 [Plate 3–A].
43. Von Dassow, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 39 [Plate 3–A]. The deceased was meant to emulate Osiris, who according to myth, was killed by his brother

The Egyptians believed that intellect resided in the heart rather than the brain. In other words, they believed the heart to be the center of one's being. This is the reasoning behind the practice of not removing the heart during mummification, despite the removal of all other organs.[44] All of one's thoughts and memories were thus thought to reside in the heart; as Saphinaz-Amal Naguib aptly states, "the heart carries the thought of memory – conscience or, more exactly, of memory as witness."[45] As this statement alludes to, it was believed that the heart became a separate entity from the deceased in the afterlife. It had the ability to speak, and, more importantly, it had the ability to speak out against its owner during the judgment scene in the Hall of Two Maats.[46] If one was deceptive in the tribunal, they risked their heart speaking out against them. The concern was thus that the heart would sabotage the deceased's chances of passing judgment. This is an uncertainty that could not be tolerated. The purpose of Chapter 30B is to silence the heart and prevent it from speaking out against its owner in the tribunal,

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Seth and had his body parts scattered throughout the land. His wife, Isis, collected his body parts and reassembled them by wrapping them in bandages, resembling a mummy. Isis was successful in reanimating her husband, but he was never fully complete, and thus had to remain in the underworld. While Seth brought charges against Osiris in the Great Hall of Heliopolis, the details of these charges remain unknown. Despite these charges, Osiris was found "true-of voice" and given his place as king and judge of the dead. The goal of the deceased was thus to achieve the same rebirth and vindication as Osiris (however, this did not mean that the deceased held the same position as Osiris in the afterlife). To concretize this association, the deceased was identified as Osiris-X in much of the funerary literature. The funerary literature further associates the deceased with Osiris by frequently identifying the deceased's son with Osiris' son, Horus.

44. Taylor, *Journey Through the Afterlife*, 161.

45. Saphinaz-Amal Naguib, "The Weighing of the Heart: Iconic Image and Symbol," in *In Search of Symbols: An Explorative Study*, ed. Jens Braarvig and Thomas Krogh (Oslo: Novus forlag, 1997): 84.

46. Taylor, *Journey Through the Afterlife*, 209.

thereby preventing irregularities in the courtroom.[47]

In his commentary on the plate displaying the Weighing of the Heart in the Papyrus of Ani, Ogden Goelet states that the heart could either blurt out wrongdoings that the deceased was attempting to conceal, or falsify deeds they had not committed.[48] While it has traditionally been held that the heart could not lie, Goelet's contradiction to this established idea likely comes from the wording of the translation featured above – "Do not tell lies about me in the presence of the god" – where the subject of possible dishonesty is the heart. However, as will be discussed in the following paragraph, other translations seem to indicate that it might be possible to conceal one's wrongdoings from the heart.

In his English translation of *Das Hertz im Umkreis des Glaubens*, Ibrahim M. Eltorai states that "the deceased had to confess all his sins. He could not lie, as his heart could speak against him, if it chose to. This proved a drawback in the Egyptians' religion, and they took great pains to ensure that their hearts would not speak against them."[49] The latter part of this statement strongly implies that the concealment of one's sins was something desirable, and this difference in interpretation can be traced back to a different translation of the source material. What is translated above as "Do not tell lies about me in the presence of the god," is here translated as, "say nothing about my lies against me in the presence of the Great God of the West (Osiris)."[50] The latter translation thus

47. It is unclear as to why the testimony would alter the weight of the heart. Arguably, the absence of additional information in the trial may prevent a change in the scales.
48. Von Dassow, *The Book of the Dead,* 165.
49. Ibrahim M. Eltorai. "The Role of the Heart in Egyptian Thought (From Das Hertz im Umkreis des Glaubens By Brunner 1965)," in *A Spotlight on the History of Ancient Egyptian Medicine* (Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press, 2020), 134.
50. Eltorai. "The Role of the Heart in Egyptian Thought," 135.

directly anticipates dishonesty on the part of the deceased instead of the heart. The intense desire to pass the trial and secure a place in the afterlife thus produces a magical means by which one can lie by omission without contradiction. This is another method of ensuring a successful result in the trial.

In addition, the spells, such as Chapter 30B, can also be found on heart-scarab amulets. These amulets take the form of a scarab – albeit with wildly varied designs – with Chapter 30B written on the back. These amulets became very common at the dawn of the New Kingdom,[51] where they were placed within the mummy wrappings on top of the heart. These amulets were specifically intended to silence the heart in the tribunal. If a person could not afford a copy of the *Book of Going Forth by Day*, a heart-scarab amulet offered a potentially cheaper alternative to grant the same ritual knowledge, depending on the material the scarab was made of. It was not unusual, however, for a tomb to contain two copies of the spell: one on the amulet and one on the papyrus scroll.[52] Multiple copies of a spell were thought to increase its efficacy, and therefore demonstrate its importance.[53] Furthermore, Chapter 30B can also be found on heart amulets, which, as the name suggests, take the form of a crude human heart.

Chapter 30B specifically addresses the deceased's heart directly, instead of the judgment scene as a whole. This distinction is important, because if the heart spoke out on the deceased's wrongdoings, they automatically failed the trial.[54] The Weighing of

51. Taylor, *Journey Through the Afterlife*, 110.
52. Sometimes spells were duplicated within the papyrus scroll. For instance, in the Papyrus of Ani, Chapter 30B was attached to the vignette of the Weighing of the Heat and later to Plate 15.
53. Taylor, *Journey Through the Afterlife,* 273.
54. It is unclear why the heart would wish to sabotage the deceased. For more on this see Von Dassow, *The Egyptian Book of The Dead*, 165.

the Heart was thus a crucial moment – should events unfold unexpectedly, the deceased faced the undesirable outcome of failing to pass judgment and therefore ceasing to be. Removing the heart's ability to speak out against its owner was therefore a safeguard against the possibility of an undesirable result. Scholars have closely tied Chapter 30B to the spell in Chapter 125, as this spell is also intended to circumvent potential failure.

Chapter 125 is a long and intricate spell centered on allowing the deceased to enter the Hall of Judgment. The spell outlines the appropriate prayers to be said, and how to declare one's innocence before the tribunal. The part that we shall focus upon is the second Declaration of Innocence. The second Declaration of Innocence consists of forty-two lines, each addressing a different judge and a different offence. The deceased was meant to state the name of the judge and deny the offence over which the judge presided. One of the magical components of the text was that it granted the deceased knowledge the true name of each of the judges. In ancient Egypt, knowing a person's true name granted you power over them, as will be explored in greater detail below. The important element to retain here is that all of these offences had to be denied for the individual to proceed into the afterlife.

Hence, it is clear that ritual knowledge was necessary to traverse the dangers of the afterlife. It was expected that the deceased would know the spells and names of the judges when they arrived at the Hall of Judgment. If they were not provided with this knowledge by being buried with a copy of the *Book of Going Forth by Day*, they would not have been able to enter the Hall of Judgment and declare their innocence, for the gatekeepers would have ended their journey and caused the deceased to perish.[55] While ritual

55. For more on this see Assmann, "Death and Initiation in the Funerary Religions of Ancient Egypt," 143–152.

knowledge was important for arriving at the judgment hall and conducting the proper practices within it, moral worth was equally important to ensuring continuity in the afterlife.

As stated above, the second Declaration of Innocence in the Papyrus of Ani had two parts. While the first required the deceased to address each of the judges by name, the second required them to deny the offence that each judge presided over.[56] The second component – the denial of the forty two misdeeds listed – allowed for a process of purification to take place.[57] While it was likely that the deceased didn't commit all of those misdeeds, it was also highly improbable that they didn't commit any. The deeds listed below are those which were likely to have been committed by the deceased, and which would have required magical purification to negate:

> O Burning One who came forth backwards, I have not told lies.
> O He-whose-Face-is-behind-him who came forth from his hole, I have not caused (anyone) to weep.
> O Proclaimer of Speech who came forth from *Weryt*, I have not been hot(-tempered).
> O He-who-Brings-his-Offering who comes forth from *Asyut*, I have not been violent.[58]

56. Just as each *Book of Going Forth by Day* is different, so are the Declarations of Innocence within them. A distinction specifically noted in the Papyrus of Ani and addressed here.
57. It is important to note that the deceased did not need to be literate to use the spells. Literacy rates for the everyday language of hieratic were very low, and even fewer knew how to read hieroglyphs. Egyptians believed that if the deceased was not previously literate, the extra knowledge required to read the spells was acquired after passing over into the beyond. This does not apply to the case of the case of the Papyrus of Ani, as Ani was a scribe. See John Baines, *Visual and Written Culture in Ancient Egypt* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 49–50.
58. Von Dassow, *The Book of the Dead,* 95 [Plate 31].

It was almost certain that the deceased, regardless of who they were, lied, lashed out in anger, and/or caused someone to cry at least once during their lifetime. After all, a human who lived their life according to the principles of Maat was still a human; a human with emotions that would likely have thrown them off the ideal path, if only for a moment. However, absolute purity was required to enter the afterlife.[59] The deceased thus required the use of ritual knowledge to defend and purify themselves before the tribunal.

If these statements purified the deceased, the question remains as to what the heart could say to damn the deceased. In other words, the question remains as to the usefulness of Chapter 30B. It is important to note that, although the second Declaration of Innocence and the Weighing of the Heart take place separately, they are nevertheless related: both are trials to determine the worthiness of the deceased, and are, therefore, of equal importance. It was quite common for the *Book of Going Forth by Day* to depict the deceased declaring his innocence before Osiris and the tribunal, and then placing his heart on the scales to be weighed.[60] In the case of the Papyrus of Ani, the Weighing of the Heart occurs before the Declaration of Innocence. As the scriptural canon for Egyptian mortuary works was not fixed,[61] very little consistency exists in textual examples of their order in the papyri among mortuary literature for private persons.[62] However, this inconsistency does not change their purpose or effectiveness; the Weighing of the Heart proceeded in the same fashion regardless of whether the Declaration of Innocence had taken place previously or not.

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59. Assmann, "Death as Enemy," 78.
60. The sequence mentioned here is yet another variation of how the deceased's journey could unfold.
61. Von Dassow, *The Book of the Dead,* 151.
62. Von Dassow, *The Book of the Dead,* 151.

It is worth emphasizing here that, while these spells were indeed intended to guarantee successful passage into eternity, they were not intended to be used to cheat through the system; rather, they were understood as preparation for any problems that may have arisen. Morality remained of the utmost importance, while magic supplemented it.[63] However, there are spells within the *Book of Going Forth by Day* which portray the deceased threatening the gods harm if they do not act in accordance with the deceased's wishes. Chapter 93 threatens the gods Re, Osiris, Khepri and Atum:

> I am stronger thereby than the strong ones, I am mightier thereby than the mighty ones. If I be ferried over and taken to the East with bound horns, or if any injury be done to me…I will swallow up the phallus of Re and the head of Osiris, I will be guided to the tomb of the decapitation of the gods in which they make me answer; I will bind the horns of Khepri, I will become the stone in the Eye of Atum the Destroyer […][64]

Likewise, in Chapter 124, which depicts the deceased approaching the Hall of Judgment, the following is stated:

> May I guide the hearts of the gods, and may they protect me, may I be mighty among those who suspend themselves on high. As for any god or any goddess who shall oppose themselves to me, they shall be handed over to those who are in charge of the year, who live on hearts […][65]

The deceased gained the ability to defy the gods by eating divine food. The gods that these spells threaten are those who presided over the tribunal, and these spells would have been said before

63. Assmann, "Death as Enemy," 78.
64. Von Dassow, *The Book of the Dead,* 66 [Plate 16].
65. Von Dassow, *The Book of the Dead,* 82 [Plate 24].

entering the tribunal. There are no such threats in the spells that were spoken inside the tribunal, but it appears that it was permissible to make such statements on the path to the tribunal. This is yet another layer of control the deceased was provided with to ensure a successful result in the tribunal.

As noted earlier, the deceased required magical knowledge to utter the names of the judges; however, magical knowledge also played another key role regarding names. The spoken word, the written word, and representations are fundamental to Egyptian magic. Egyptians believed that a person's name contained the identity of that person.[66] Thus, knowledge of someone's name granted power over that individual. This is recounted in a mythological tale where Isis[67] poisons Re with a snake. She agrees to cure him, but only if he reveals his true name to her.[68] The pain was so great that he agrees, and she speaks his name thereby curing him.[69] As in this myth, the importance of knowing the deity's name could be at play in the second Declaration of Innocence. If the names of the judges presented in the second Declaration of Innocence were their true names and not aliases, by speaking their names the deceased would have gained power over the judges. In other words, if one of the judges were to notice any irregularities in the deceased's case, knowledge of their name could prevent the judge from speaking out. The text does not appear to provide the major gods' true names, for their common names – i.e., Osiris, Horus, Re, etc. – are used in the books. In the case of the second Declaration of Innocence, knowledge of the major gods' names was

66. Taylor, *Journey Through the Afterlife,* 29–30.
67. Sister and wife of Osiris.
68. Re was not the deity's true name. His true name was unknown.
69. *Ancient Egyptian Magical Texts*, trans. J.F. Borghouts (NISBA: Religious Texts Translation Series, 9. Leiden:
E.J. Brill, 1978), 51–55.

irrelevant, as they were not the ones the deceased was appealing to. Additionally, the previous spell, Chapter 124, addresses control over gods and goddesses in general.

The knowledge of the true names of the judges and how to address them therefore allowed the deceased the ability to further ensure their success by possessing the ability to exert power over the judges if needed. By possessing this power, the deceased held the ability to influence both tests and cover their bases. It is important to note that the texts do not explicitly indicate that the deceased could exert control over judges. However, given the stated desire to hold control over the gods in Chapter 93 and 124, it is not particularly difficult to believe that the deceased would use the power of the judge's true names to ensure a successful outcome if given the option. The control aspect may be superfluous, as the purpose of the second Declaration of Innocence is purification. Nevertheless, the Egyptians equipped themselves with every possible advantage to ensure success in their trial.

Conclusion

The spells found in Chapter 30B and Chapter 125 were clearly intended to provide the deceased with additional tools to ensure their continuity into the afterlife. These spells were widely used and appear in many tombs and graves from the New Kingdom period onwards. The widespread use of magical tools meant to circumvent the uncertainties and obstacles of the judgment scene demonstrates a strong desire to enter the afterlife and the lengths to which the Egyptians were willing to go to secure a successful passage into eternity. These magical practices not only existed because the Egyptians believed in the necessity of undergoing the trial of judgement, but also because they were unwilling to leave

their fate to chance. To enter the afterlife, the heart of the deceased needed to balance against Maat, the purest form of truth and order. If any wrongdoing were revealed, the heart, however slightly, would not balance against Maat. If the deceased was not able to cleanse themselves of all of their misdeeds, they would thus fail.

It was clear to the Egyptians that humans – even the righteous – were not perfect; therefore, to ensure the continuity of the righteous into the afterlife, they needed to deny and thus mitigate the flaws of being human through magic. However, this is not to imply that the deceased were maliciously attempting to cheat their way into the afterlife. Most ancient Egyptians believed and followed the Maatian path, but they did not want to leave any part of their trial to chance, for the possibility of erasure and no longer existing was an intolerable outcome to be avoided at all costs. Since no human could possibly lead a flawless life and flaws were not acceptable to the tribunal, a magical solution was developed to circumvent the conundrum. Thus, Chapter 30B and Chapter 125 were two methods designed to remedy the problem of perfection and ensure the desired result.