The image shows the interior of an ancient Egyptian pyramid chamber. The walls, ceiling, and floor are covered in hieroglyphs. In the center, a large stone sphinx statue is illuminated by a spotlight. The lighting is dramatic, with the rest of the chamber in shadow.

The Pyramid Texts: Launch Manual or Message in a Bottle?

*How a lone disfigured hieroglyph
revealed the footprints of the greatest
Identity Theft in history.*

By Robert S. Neyland

The Pyramid Texts: Launch Manual or Message in a Bottle?

I have a copy of the launch manual for the Apollo 15 Lunar Mission. My late brother and father were guests of NASA to view the launch April 29, 1971, as three astronauts thundered skyward atop the mighty Saturn V booster. It propelled them safely into the celestial heavens on their journey to rendezvous with the Moon. They would in effect live forever in the minds of humanity, as part of the truly select group of humans to stand on the Moon, and the first to use the lunar rover.

Called the Flight Operations Manual, it is a massive document 3 inches thick with well over 500 pages. From the days when spaceflight moved at the speed of paper, it is a bewildering array of procedures, flow charts of checklists, schematics, failsafe protocols and cryptic acronyms (like CS/CM Activation, and LCRU/GTCA Pallet).

The parallels were inescapable the first time I entered the Tomb of Unas in May 2019. Two large chambers, each 5 meters in height with fine limestone walls inscribed from floor to ceiling with hieroglyphs. It was breathtaking. Of course, we did the obligatory tourist thing where the guides shut off the lights and shone a flashlight along the alabaster walls surrounding the sarcophagus, revealing an otherwise invisible depiction of kings and royal activities embossed into the alabaster. This is a good example of veiled content present in the tomb of King Unas (2353-2323 BCE).



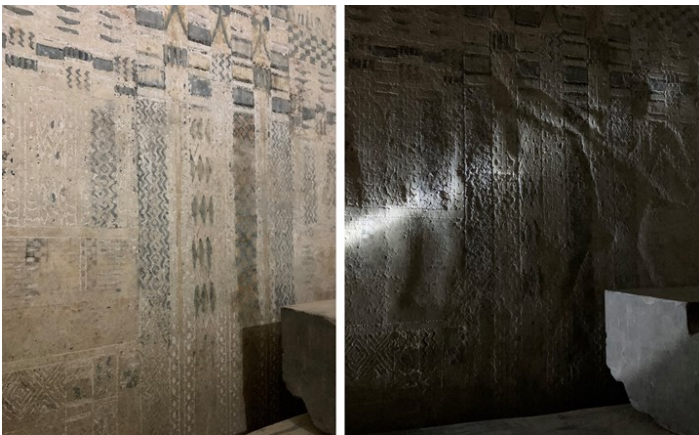
Over 26,000 hieroglyphic symbols arranged in vertical columns, precisely inscribed into the limestone walls in an almost perfect state of preservation. Together, they comprise what is known as the Pyramid Texts. They are the oldest known religious writings from ancient Egypt.

They contain instructions, protective spells, procedures, invocations and rituals to safely train, equip and guide the spirit of the deceased king to the celestial afterlife with the gods. It is truly a launch manual for the dead king, inscribed in stone.

But there is another story carefully woven between the lines, just beneath the surface of the official narrative. Skillfully crafted, using the devices known as *Heka* of insinuation, puns, wordplay, satire and specific text position, this camouflaged narrative has been previously undetected. This is the story of how a single disfigured hieroglyph in the Pyramid Texts revealed the footprints of the most profound Identity Theft in history. Captured by allegory and inscribed in stone, it is a story about a lioness, a beard, and the Moon.

The Pyramid Texts were first found by Gaston Maspero in 1882 when he discovered the Tomb of King Unas some 27 meters beneath his ruined pyramid. The intricately carved columns of text represent the first time that the ancient rituals and oral traditions for guiding the king to the afterlife were committed to stone. Since their discovery, the Pyramid Texts have been translated numerous times into multiple languages.

The most up-to-date and unbiased translation is considered that of James Allen (1986,2005).

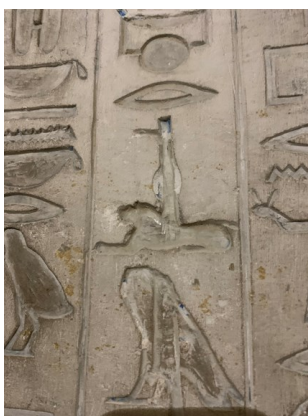




Ruined Pyramid of Unas at Saqqara, beneath which is the Tomb of Unas containing the Pyramid Texts. Photo by Robert Neyland, Saqqara Egypt, February 2022.

Our initial inquiry was triggered by a single out-of-use symbol which was observed in May 2019. The symbol is located precisely in the center of the north wall of the tomb's sarcophagus chamber and is deliberately disfigured by over-carving. It depicts a couchant (lying down) lioness with a bent rod protruding from her back that has been clumsily gouged out.

Manu Seyfzadeh, Dr. Robert Schoch and Robert Bauval have previously identified this symbol with Mehit, the lion goddess, patron protector of the priests, royal writers, and archivist guild since the dawn of Egyptian civilization. The Heka-Mehit title was prominently displayed by the highest officials of early Old Kingdom as a mark of royal Scribe and Archivist distinction. While this combination of lioness and rod appears in sealings and title



records from the first four dynasties of ancient Egypt, it disappeared from the known record under the reign of Fourth Dynasty King Khafre, 150 years before the time of King Unas. The title was last held by Master Scribe and Overseer of Works Mery, who served under Khafre.

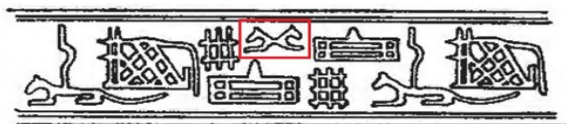
John Anthony West and Dr. Robert Schoch proposed 30 years ago that the Great Sphinx used to be a much older lion. Since 2017, we know that the original statue wasn't a lion, but a lioness in the image of the early dynastic goddess Mehit. Since 2019, we know that this lioness

statue was transformed into the Great Sphinx when her head and neck were carved down during the Old Kingdom. In fact, Seyfzadeh, Schoch and Bauval named this glyph symbol the JAW sign, in honor of the late John Anthony West, who was among the first to assert that the Great Sphinx was not original to Khafre but was remodeled from a much older lion monument.

The appearance of this disfigured out-of-use hieroglyph, and its intentionally prominent placement in the Pyramid Texts prompted us to search for evidence as to why this was done. Was it a scribal error or intentional? If it was intentional, why was it made to appear as an accident? Were there other references to Mehit and the Great Sphinx of Rostau (ancient Giza) elsewhere in the Pyramid Texts? Was the prominent location of this disguised symbol significant?

We returned to Saqqara in February 2022 and spent three weeks examining, cataloging and photographing the Pyramid Texts. We reported our startling findings in a technical paper just published in Archeological Discovery Journal, *"The Bearded Lady of Giza; Appropriation, Conspiracy, and Veiled Protest in the Pyramid Texts of Unas"*.

The history of the Great Sphinx of Giza is one of the most perplexing and enduring mysteries of ancient civilization. How is it possible that the most colossal statue from the ancient world, larger than most temples, is utterly without mention in any historical record for over a THOUSAND YEARS after its supposed creation? Even then, historical textual connection with Kahfre is tenuous at best and described by Egyptologist Mark Lehner as "problematic"; the remnants of a single damaged cartouche on the Dream Stele placed by Thutmose IV, 1200 years later. By contrast, the lioness Mehit and her associated Moon cult religion have a rich iconography that spans the first four Dynasties of the Old Kingdom, terminating under the reign of Khafre, when the Sphinx was purportedly created.



The symbol for the co-joined Lioness Aker, whose hieroglyph is framed in red and shown with Mehit on this sealing dating to the First Dynasty (3000 BCE)

The commonly accepted belief is that a Fourth Dynasty pharaoh had the Great Sphinx carved into the bedrock of the Giza Plateau in approximately 2560 B.C.E. However, a rising tide of research indicates that the statue was already ancient when the King carved his likeness into the head 4,500 years ago.

In 2019, I published a paper demonstrating sculptural evidence that the head of the Great Sphinx could have been carved from a larger lioness head and neck which would have been a naturally proportioned statue, unlike the Great Sphinx whose head appears too small for its body and limbs. A remnant of the original statue's neck can still be observed on the back of the monument. This work was featured in FENIX Magazine, February 2020 issue.



The Bearded Lady of Giza. Sculptural simulation showing that all historical features of Great Sphinx could have been derived from proportional lioness head. Sculpture by Robert Neyland, 2019.

In *The Bearded Lady of Giza*, we have presented evidence that a subtext exists within the Pyramid Texts which has escaped previous translations. Understandably, it would escape anyone who assumed the Sphinx was an original creation by Khafre, or another king of the Old Kingdom. In fact, this may represent the first time that the Pyramid Texts have been examined from the perspective of a re-carved Sphinx, sculpted in the likeness of the King and adorned with the divine braided beard.

We discovered that:

1) The disfigured archaic, out-of-use lioness symbol in the Tomb of King Unas was not accidental, it was a deliberate clue, leading to written proof that the Great Sphinx was made from an older lioness statue.

2) There is a camouflaged subtext that runs through the Pyramid Texts that has been previously undetected. The message was written in the Texts using the ancient method of *Heka*—the language of Perception, Utterance and Creation in ancient Egypt. The composer used *Heka*, text position and interior design to hide the truth within the Afterlife instructions for the King to resurrect in the sky.

3) This embedded narrative contains a lament of the extinguishing of an ancient Moon religion and the desecration of its monument at Giza. The hidden message was a protest of the Identity Theft and sacrilege committed by Khafre, who turned the ancient lioness into a male sphinx adorned with a divine beard and declared himself as a god. He “bearded” the lioness, and Mehit became She Who is Not Mentioned.

4) Text position matters! Textual topography is shown as a tool for establishing intent and meaning. This is the first time Pyramid Texts have been subjected to textual topographical analysis. In fact, Unas’s Tomb is an architectural simulation of the monumental lioness at Giza that the king’s spirit literally must pass through on his journey to the Afterlife with the gods.

5) At the conclusion of the Pyramid Texts the King becomes the Full Moon, and demonstrates that it is the Night, not the Day that is being celebrated. This is a fundamental departure from the commonly understood main theme of the Pyramid Texts.

6) We identify the prime suspect for this subversion; a high official who was later booted from his own tomb at Saqqara.

7) At last, we have an explanation for why the Egyptians’ greatest statue is not mentioned in any way for over a thousand years after its supposed creation- it was taboo and possibly shunned. This may represent the only known written recounting of the story of the Great Sphinx.

Hidden By Heka

Officially the Pyramid Texts were not meant to be seen by the general population. They were intended for the deceased King alone, sealed in his tomb. Their purpose is conventionally understood to protect, train and equip the king's spirit for the journey into eternal Afterlife with the gods, even if the cult was no longer practiced or in existence.

An essential part of this training of the King's spirit was known as *Heka*, the language of Divine Creation. To the ancient Egyptians, *Heka* was an acquired, verbally uttered skill that could be captured in and conveyed with written text. The presence of protective spells and invocations in the Pyramid Texts indicate that it was mastery of this verbal skill which would enable the king's resurrected spirit to attain eternal life.

It was believed that thought, image, deed and power were united in the concept of *Heka*. We see this in the beginning of the Pyramid Texts with the powerful invocation "*Be come forth! You have been called upon!*"

Heka explored the phonetic similarities between hieroglyphic words that otherwise have no semantic relationship to each other. It made extensive use of homophony and phonetic mimicry. These are words that sound similar but have different meanings, and that can be deliberately interchanged to create entirely new meanings. The added nuance of Heka in this context is that a thing is uttered into existence by referring to it without naming it. The ancient Egyptian scribes were consummate masters at this "meaning within a meaning" wordplay and it is used extensively throughout the Pyramid Texts.

Mehit was intimately associated with Heka. The Heka-Mehit title was prominently displayed by the highest officials of the early Old Kingdom as a mark of royal Scribe and Archivist distinction. In fact, the hieroglyphic symbol for Heka magic is the hind part of a lion on a standard!

The hieroglyphic symbol for Heka Magic is the hind part of a lion on a standard. To the left, for comparison, is a wooden relief of Mehit from the Saqqara tomb of the Third Dynasty Heka-Mehit master Hesy-Re. Above is a photo of the hind part of the Great Sphinx as seen from the south. The Museum of Egyptian Antiquities, Cairo, Egypt, September 2018, and Giza, Egypt, May 2019.



Mehit was much older and associated with the Moon, who ruled the Night and provided the clockwork regularity to the heavens. From antiquity, she was the object of devotion for the Thoth-Moon cult religion. The King, who adorned the colossal statue with the divine plaited beard, proclaimed himself as Living God and signaled kingship as associated with the sun, who ruled the Day. With the submersion and expunging of the ancient moon cult, any direct mention of Mehit in a royal tomb may well have been heretical and seditious by the time of Unas and been at considerable peril to the composer. Any lingering mention of the lioness image would have drawn attention to the true origin of the monument and delegitimized Khafre's claim to divinity.

The Bearded Lady

It is time to introduce a central character in this Identity Theft drama, one that is largely unsung in research about the Texts but is pivotal to the entire story. That is the divine braided beard, curved and coiled at the tip. A symbolic representation of divinity from the dawn of Egyptian civilization, it was reserved exclusively for gods and deceased, ascended god-kings. Living kings sported a short, square, plaited beard.

Having his stone sculptors adorn the sculpted face of the king with the symbolic curved, braided beard was a proclamation that the King was the living god, not in the afterlife, but here and now, and it was quite without precedent in history. This monumental symbolic gesture was a profound departure from the ideology of kingship and would have been a shocking sacrilege. Emblazoning the King's face with the divine braided beard was not just a stylistic nuance—it was a theological seismic event!

Indeed, the very notion of such a gesture is so extraordinary that many modern Egyptologists conclude that the divine braided beard was either added later, or that the Sphinx statue originally depicted the sun god, not the king.

For example, stone fragments of the long, curved plaited beard that Caviglia found at the base of the Sphinx during the first modern excavation in 1812 were central to Ricke's argument that the Sphinx was conceived as a sun god (Ricke, 1970). However, discussing fragments A-B of the Sphinx beard displayed in the Cairo Museum, Mark Lehner noted that the stone is very similar to that of Bed

7a, the lowest layer of Member III in the natural rock of the Sphinx. Thus, it appears to contain many operculina, the tiny spiral fossil that is abundant in that layer. Lehner expressed that the strongest argument that the divine beard is original to the Sphinx is the similarity of the stone of the fragments to the natural rock of the Sphinx chest (Lehner, 1991). We also examined the beard fragments in the Cairo Museum and agree that the plaited and curled beard appears to be original to the carving of the head of the Sphinx, re-carved however from the head and neck of a prior lioness statue representing the goddess Mehit.

How do we know?

While veiled hints are embedded throughout the Texts, there are several clues that really stand out that Mehit, the Sphinx and the divine braided beard are being described. The references are insinuated, but the composer's intent is deliberate and unambiguous.

1. Sarcophagus chamber West Gable: The Pyramid Texts begin here in what is a virtual summary. The very first column mentions the *plaited serpent*. The association is set up with boat, and navigation. Further, this association is established between "plaited", "serpent", "beard" and "coil". The Gable texts go on to mention a face grafted onto another face, and an elongated body that is "side-struck" (the Major Fissure that runs through the Sphinx body). The face is noted as being royal, and the location is identified as *Rostau* (ancient name for Giza). Remarkably, the Gable section ends confirming that the guardian of the scribes was invoked earlier—two papyrus strips are mentioned with an unnamed lion.

2. Disfigured Mehit symbol: Precisely in the center of the North wall of the Sarcophagus Chamber, right at eye level is the symbol that initially caught our attention. The lioness with bent rod above her back which was deliberately obscured by over-carving. It is a signpost to look for other clues.

3. Orphaned Column in Connecting Passage: The final text column of the Offering Ritual was placed down in the connecting passage, even though there was plenty of room on the wall above. Here, reference is made to "tail", and on the wall above *Heka* is directly spelled out with the statement "has provided him (*Unas*) with his *Heka magic*". Remember that the symbol for *Heka* is the hind



Reconstruction of the divine beard of the Great Sphinx from discovered fragments of Upper Member Mokattam limestone layers making up part of the Giza Plateau. Photos of fragments A, B (upper right), and D (upper left) are shown. Lower right, image showing the rock beds of the Upper (Gauri designation 7a-8d), and part of the Middle limestone formation as a visual guide to identify the Operculina fossil-containing beds from which the Sphinx neck and beard were carved. Upper left image, © The Trustees of the British Museum, Asset number 396590001, (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0), URL: <https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/image/396590001>. Upper right image, the Museum of Egyptian Antiquities, Cairo, Egypt, February 2022. Illustration and photo below by Lehner 1991 both modified.

part of a lion on a staff! The tail reference is located on the south side, just like it is on the Sphinx. Here begins the remarkable simulation in the Antechamber of the lioness body, which the King's spirit must literally pass through on his journey to the Afterlife.

4. Antechamber West Gable: entering the antechamber, the co-joined double lion *Aker* is invoked as guarding the entry/exit between the Netherworld and the Horizon World. This double lion is depicted with the Mehit symbol on royal sealings from as early as the First Dynasty (approx. 3000 BCE).

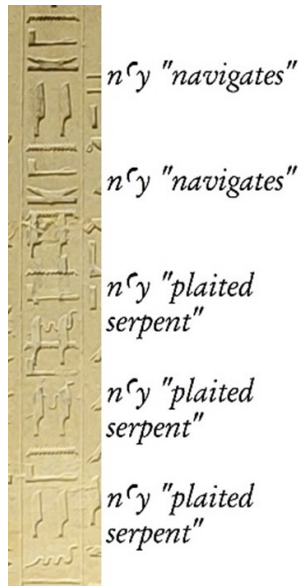
5. Antechamber South Wall: This is where the two known names of the Sphinx are invoked—*Horemakhet* and *Horakhty*. Thought to not have been used until much later in the New Kingdom, *Horemakhet* (Horus of the Horizon) is phonetically embedded and veiled. Exactly on a line 2 meters further along the wall, right at eye level (the Horizon line), the name *Horakhty* is actually spelled out. Robert Bauval previously identified this as the ancient name of the Sphinx in the sky. This is confirmed by three lioness head symbols nearby, one of which is adorned with a cobra uraeus above its head. This is an unusual symbol that appears to be unique. Another forceful hint.

6. Antechamber East Wall:

The Sphinx faces due east, and so of course the east wall is where this journey all comes together. The word “lion” appears 11 times in the Pyramid Texts, and 10 of them are on the East Wall. On the right side of the wall, a seemingly nonsensical column of text is inscribed:

N’y, N’y, N’y, N’y, N’y. Repeated five times, it translates as “*Navigates, Navigates, Plaited Serpent, Plaited Serpent, Plaited Serpent*”.

Using the sarcasm of absurdity, the composer is lampooning and ridiculing the divine braided beard that the Sphinx wore. Above this remarkable text column is a reference to “*the evil deed that has been done*”.



7. Dawn: We know that the Sphinx is an equinoxial statue, precisely facing the rising sun on the equinoxes. Where would you expect to find an equinox text? The East Wall has 36 columns of text. Column 18, right in the center, speaks about and uses the word “Dawn”. The sign for “*lion*” in Column 7 faces the word “*east*”, adjacent in Column 6.

8. Rostau and Cavern/Chamber: In the northeast portion of this East wall, the location is named as Rostau (ancient Giza), and there in the Cavern/Chamber of Creation, Unas receives the Eye of Horus and ascends. Northeast corner-- topographically positioned precisely where you would expect to find it; under the left forepaw of the Great Sphinx.

9. Thoth/Moon: This symbol appears in several places, notably at the Texts' beginning on the West Gable, and the final columns in the Entry Passageway, where Unas remarkably swallows the cobra uraeus--the principal insignia of solar divinity. With this act, Unas becomes *Babi*, the bull baboon, who represents none other than Thoth, the Full Moon. The final words of the Pyramid Texts leave little doubt that Unas is the Moon, and it is the Night, not the Day that is being celebrated. The Pyramid Texts are ultimately about the role of the Moon in the Afterlife journey, not the Sun!



The east wall of the Entry corridor from the north (EE). Framed in white is the phrase “Unas is Babi”, referring to the Full Moon. Screenshot from Virtual Unas, courtesy of Egypt Exploration Society at <https://www.ees.ac.uk/burial-chamber-of-unas-saqqara>.

Message in a Bottle?

The official purpose of the Pyramid Texts was to provide protection and instructions to guide the spirit of the king on his journey to the afterlife. However, it is clear there is a sarcastic and disdainful undercurrent that runs through the Texts.

This intricately crafted and camouflaged rebuke to the state-ordained new solar religion potentially came at great peril to the composers. In fact, the final passage of the Texts in the Entry Chamber about Unas and the Moon reads like an act of outright sabotage by the composer, undermining the massive bulk of the text preceding it inside the chambers. It seems unlikely that this subversive message only served to mock the deceased king entombed alone in his pyramid.

It compels the broader question: Were the Pyramid Texts simply afterlife instructions for the deceased King Unas, or were they intended for the broader audience of posterity as a hidden record memorializing the erased history of the Night cult of the disfigured Mehit? Was this work designed as a Message in a Bottle for future readers?

This possibility implies a foreknowledge of intrusions into older royal tombs, a practice which appears to have become widespread by the time of Unas. However, this may explain the puzzling absence of the tomb's customary giant blocking stones in the entry passageway. Weighing dozens of tons each, there was no evidence of the three portcullis stones, or signs of their removal when the tomb was discovered by Maspero in 1882. It is even possible that the tomb was never sealed. It would seem as if the composer meant for this message to be viewed by posterity.

Who did this?

The composer of these important funeral texts would have been a high ranking official with considerable authority. Surprisingly, we have identified the prime suspect, whose name is hidden high up on the Ante-chamber East Gable. His name was ***I'hy***, the Grand Vizier of King Unas. He was a powerful man with multiple titles: Overseer of the Royal Scribes, Overseer of Royal Works, and Chamberlain of the Royal House. *I'hy* was buried in his own tomb nearby the Pyramid of Unas. However, in a bizarre and ironic historical twist,

I'hy's body was unceremoniously booted from his tomb, and it was taken over by King Unas' daughter *Seshehet Idut*, a most unusual case of an intrusive burial by a contemporary! His subterfuge may have caught up with him after all.

Conclusion

It appears that Egypt's oldest religious writings were in fact both launch instructions for the king's spirit AND a Message in a Bottle for the future. It was Unas' vizier *I'hy* who perpetrated the conspiracy to subvert the Pyramid Texts with a veiled message to record the true history of the origin of the Great Sphinx, the burying of the older Moon religion, and the sacrilegious "Bearding" of the ancient lioness monument at Giza.

We finally have a model to explain the perplexing absence of references to the most famous statue in the world for over a thousand years after we are told it was made. It was taboo and shunned by the Keepers of the Record. Thanks to a valiant priest and composer who sought to leave us with a historical record, perhaps this message has at last been read, 4,500 years later.

View our technical paper upon which this article is based:

<https://academia.edu/resource/work/83047417>



Authors Rob Neyland and Manu Seyfzadeh with Mehit, the Bearded Lady of Giza at the Scene of the Crime, the greatest Identity Theft in history.