



Susan Brind Morrow, *The Dawning Moon of the Mind: Unlocking the Pyramid Texts*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2015. 304 pp. Hardcover \$28.00. Epub \$14.99.

In 2006, Susan Brind Morrow was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship, and the result is her latest book, *The Dawning Moon of the Mind: Unlocking the Pyramid Texts*. Morrow offers a compelling argument that Egyptian hieroglyphs have been misconstrued. She takes readers on an amazing journey of explanation, description, and confirmation to relay her point that previous translations have misinterpreted the hieroglyphs. She opens the work by stating “*Hieroglyphic* means ‘mysterious,’” thus setting the descant for readers. Morrow’s book centers on the texts located in the pyramid of Unis. Unis is usually considered to be the last ruler of the Fifth Dynasty of the Old Kingdom. The small pyramid, located in Saqqara, dates back to 2323 B.C. Morrow divides her work into three sections, “the language, the translation, and seeking the deeper design.”

In the first part, Morrow offers readers an explanation of what hieroglyphs are. She presents some history of the discovery of hieroglyphs, early efforts at translation by Egyptologists, and her own background in relation to Egyptology and pyramid texts. Morrow explains the significance of the language of the hieroglyphs and various aspects of translating them. She communicates to readers that previous translations underestimated the language of the hieroglyphs. Instead of being simple prattle (my word), the pyramid texts are an elaborate use of language which combine “pictures that are letters and pictures that are pictures” to convey meaning which in part reflects the Egyptians understanding of astronomy, geometry, and nature. Morrow supports her argument with a discussion of the culture at the time and through translation of the pyramid texts.

The middle of Morrow’s work is devoted to translating the pyramid texts beginning in the entranceway, moving through the structure, and ending in the sarcophagus chamber. The translation is a flowing melody of language, and the translation is poetic in nature. Morrow offers, “Poetry is used in the original as a deliberate code to describe the numinous quality of reality,” and her translations support this revelation.

In the final section Morrow presents readers with further explanation about the translation. She takes the reader through the texts delivering insight into the overall splendor of the written language and message. Morrow conveys to readers that previous translations by Egyptologists, which saw the hieroglyphs as alien with little meaning, have neglected to recognize that the texts have deeper connotation. For Morrow, the pyramid texts need to be revisited and revealed.

As a reader with little knowledge about Egypt or Egyptology, I wondered if the book would be within my grasp, but Morrow makes this work accessible to any reader, providing a wealth of information on many subjects. For example, astronomy is used throughout the texts in the Pyramid of Unis. Morrow explains the significance of astronomy to the Egyptians, their understanding of it, and the role astronomy plays in the language of the pyramid texts. The

richness of Morrow's written language combined with the edification throughout the work makes this book worthwhile reading across audiences.

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