Introduction

While writing my last book, *Monumental Tombs of Ancient Alexandria: The Theater of the Dead*,[1] I realized that Alexandrian tombs were but one aspect of the complex eschatological landscape of Graeco-Roman Egypt. Yet, though Alexandria had provided an entrée for a non-Egyptologist into the prospect of Egypt, it certainly afforded its own richness, and I chose to investigate that facet of Graeco-Roman Egypt for much of the first decade of this century. The tombs in the rest of Egypt that I had called upon for comparanda, either in print or in cerebration, remained a dormant issue. And not only so far as I was concerned.

Lost in Egypt's honeycombed hills, distanced by its western desert, or rendered inaccessible by subsequent urban occupation, the monumental decorated tombs of the Graeco-Roman period had received little scholarly attention. Though published in descriptive reports with varying degrees of detail,[2] by the early first decade of the twenty-first century none had been subjected to critical analysis or interpretation, and most had largely been ignored. Only in the past few years has the decoration of a discrete number of these tombs been seriously addressed,[3] and then only as a singular event.

Greeks emigrating to Egypt in the wake of Alexander's conquest in 332 BCE carried with them their own conception of death and afterlife, as well as other crucial social and cultural certainties. Yet despite the elite status their role as conquerors conferred, Greeks still recognized that Egypt had dominion over death: Egypt had early learned to negotiate the realm of the dead, and, in the fourth century BCE, with the dissolution of the *polis* and a concomitant focus on the individual, the negotiation of death had become for Greeks of even greater urgency. Egyptians, for their part, having suffered centuries of foreign rule, had lost some of their earlier eschatological self-confidence. Each group stood psychologically ready to cast a wider net to ensure a blessed afterlife, and the cultural and social complexity of Graeco-Roman Egypt elicited new forms of eschatological visualization.

This volume explores the narrative pictorial programs of a group of decorated tombs from Ptolemaic and Roman-period Egypt (ca. 300 BCE to 250 CE). Its aim is to recognize their commonalities and differences across what might be perceived as ethnic and religious divides and – as closely as possible – to determine the rationale that lies behind these connections and dissonances and to set the tomb programs within their social, political, and religious context. Its further goal is to employ the analysis of these programs to interrogate the manner in which the multicultural population of Graeco-Roman Egypt chose to negotiate "the radical alterity of death."[4]

Social stratification based on ethnic heritage and domicile was certainly in play during the Ptolemaic period, and under Roman rule this social stratification was calcified by law, though of course exceptions existed in both periods.[5] But this book is about tombs, and therefore when I use the word 'ethnicity' I am not taking it in the onomastic sense, which has proven difficult, if not impossible, to substantiate, but rather in a more fluid sense based on the choice that the members of the population made

(whether a product of intermarriage or not) to adhere to one or another religious system in the design of their tomb program. It is how patrons chose to be buried, the identity they sought in constructing their afterlife, that underlies the tombs' ethnic identification.

I identify the tombs as those wedded to Egyptian or to Greek eschatological concerns primarily on the basis of two factors: the use of language and the inclusion of Greek – or Egyptian – specific narrative, whether figurally or in texts. Hieroglyphic inscriptions and captions are discrete to tombs that rely prominently on Egyptian visual eschatological content, and Greek tags are specific to tombs with overwhelmingly Greek narrative content; conversely, real hieroglyphs never appear in tombs in Alexandria regardless of the amount of Egyptian visual content these tombs employ or in the 'Greek' tombs at Tuna el-Gebel, though Greek inscriptions may. As important, tombs I consider Egyptian rely, to a great degree, on traditional Egyptian narratives to implement the deceased's journey to the afterlife; in contrast, tombs in Alexandria that include Egyptian content reduce that content to Egyptian signs and symbols or (rarely) to Egyptian architectural embellishment and constrict narrative almost universally to the signature scene of the lustration of the mummy.[6]

The Graeco-Roman period is one of rich cultural exchange, and the decorated tombs bear out the reciprocity between Egypt's two major population groups. Diaspora Jews in Egypt also found themselves in intimate contact with Greeks, and though discussed here to a far lesser extent, their mortuary monuments, too, reflect this contiguity (the gravestones at Leontopolis discussed in Chapter Three are identified as Jewish based on context). Graeco-Roman Egypt accommodates one of the most effervescent regions for Hellenistic thought, and the decoration of the monuments addressed in this book provides concrete evidence for an interchange of ideas concerning the visualization of death and afterlife. It also contributes a unique perspective on the problems posed by ethnic identification, cultural assimilation, and intentional differentiation.

EGYPT BEFORE ALEXANDER

The end of the Ramessid Dynasty in the eleventh century BCE saw a dramatic change in Egypt, as the ensuing Third Intermediate Period ushered in a period of internal warfare and foreign rule that changed the land forever. After the death of the last pharaoh of the Twentieth Dynasty, Rameses XI, about 1070 BCE, Egypt devolved into a politically bifurcated polity ruled by foreigners: Dynasty Twenty-one saw a line of kings ruling Lower Egypt from the Delta city of Tanis and a succession of priests of Amun ruling Upper Egypt from Thebes. According to most recent scholarship, this division was one of accord, with the high priesthood settled in Thebes and the royal house centered in Tanis – members of which may well have been related to one another – acting in concert to govern the land. These kings and priests might have been Libyan immigrants, though firmly egyptianized, and speculation suggests that the Libyan concept of coexisting rulers may have determined this division of power. This inherited concept also permitted a member of another powerful family of Libyan descent, who proclaimed himself "Great chief of the Libyans," to rule concurrently just south of Tanis, in the city of Bubastis.[7]

Then, in about 945 BCE, with the death of the Tanite king Psusennes II (and following the marriage of Psusennes II's daughter to the son of Osorkon, the Bubastite "great chief" Sheshonq), Sheshonq I became king of all Egypt – a kingship ratified by the priests of Amun – with Tanis as his capital, and thus ushering in Dynasty Twenty-two. Libyan kings of this dynasty continued to rule from Tanis, but beginning in the late-ninth century BCE, they shared their authority with kings ruling from other cities in Egypt, many of whom styled themselves as King of Upper and Lower Egypt (these kings are those of Dynasties Twenty-three and Twenty-four).[8] Egypt was once again a fragmented polity.

As early as 750 BCE, Nubia, the land south of Egypt, had begun to exert its influence over Upper Egypt. Around 711 BCE, under King Shabaqo, Nubia annexed a reunited Egypt, and Nubia's conflict with Assyria brought war to Egypt's shores. The Assyrian king Assurbanipal seized and looted Memphis and Thebes and set up vassal kings from among the Egyptian elite, including Psamtik, the Greek Psammetichos, who secured control of the entire country in 664 BCE. Proclaiming himself King of Upper and Lower Egypt in 657/56 BCE, he became the first native Egyptian to rule Egypt since Rameses XI, and native kings ruled Egypt until its conquest by the Persian king Cambyses II in 525 BCE. Egypt then remained under Achaemenid control until 404 BCE, when Amyrtaeus, a prince of the city of Sais in the Delta, led a successful revolt that ushered in a final period of native rule, but Egypt was a frail specter of its former self. In 343 BCE, the Persians, under King Artaxerxes III, again conquered Egypt, and the land remained part of the Achaemenid

Empire until its conquest by Alexander the Great in 332 BCE.

PREVIOUS SCHOLARSHIP AND HOW THIS BOOK APPROACHES ITS SUBJECT

The study of interaction between Greeks and Egyptians in Late-Period and Graeco-Roman Egypt is certainly not new. My earliest articles and my first book, written in the 1980s,[9] engage the theme in the sixth century BCE, and papyrologists, such as Roger Bagnall[10] and Willy Clarysse,[11] have long studied the phenomenon primarily from an onomatological or a prosopographical view. Cultural historians Kurt Goudriaan[12] and U. Østergård,[13] among others – also relying on texts – have tried to tease out the ethnic intersections that occurred; and art historians Robert Bianchi,[14] Bernard Bothmer,[15] and others have addressed the question of this interaction in Ptolemaic- and Roman-period sculpture. My previous book[16] speaks to the debt Greeks in Alexandria owed to Egypt, and, more recently, Christina Riggs[17] investigates images on Egyptian coffins within their bicultural context. It is primarily through recent literary studies, such as those of Susan Stephens[18] and Jacco Dieleman,[19] however, that the interlaced debt of Greeks and Egyptians is underscored.

This volume stands parallel to these latter works, though it admits other aspects of multiethnic contiguity. In my previous book, I suggested that Alexandrians intentionally appropriated Egyptian imagery because, on the one hand – despite a rich literary tradition – they lacked the visual vocabulary necessary to articulate their new and most pressing eschatological aims and, on the other, they respected the efficacy of Egypt in all things eschatological. Here I not only question these interpretations but complicate this interaction by focusing on case studies from the *chora*, the countryside of Graeco-Roman Egypt. My goal is to investigate how the tomb in Graeco-Roman Egypt concretizes nuanced social and religious relationships as individuals attempt to palliate death. The roughly 500-year period under investigation offers a rich opportunity to recognize the changing cultural and social climate in Graeco-Roman Egypt and, through a lens focused on its visual presentation, to assess how this changed climate, and the interchange of ideas that the contiguity of cultures generated, acted upon eschatological expression.

Although correspondences exist between Egyptian and Greek afterlife religion, especially insofar as Greek 'Orphisim' is concerned (see Chapters Two and Three), the two eschatological systems nevertheless show fundamental differences that set them apart from one another. One of the most basic differences is Egyptian afterlife religion's dependence on the preservation of the body (or a likeness of the body), a consideration that is nonexistent in Greek and Roman religion. In Greece (and Rome), though burial is of utmost importance, cremation and inhumation exist concurrently: despite the appropriation of mummification in Roman-period Egypt by seemingly ethnic Greeks (and Romans), in Greek and Roman eschatological religion, preservation of the body is not a necessary factor for achieving a beneficent afterlife. The same holds true for Jews, who often practiced secondary burial. A second major difference between Greek and Roman eschatology (and the apparent reason for the first) surrounds the consideration of the life force or 'soul' – the Egyptian *ba* and the Greek (and Roman) *psyche* (see Chapter Two): though their depiction may have traits in common with one another, the psyche leaves the body at death, whereas the *ba*, though it leaves the body, can and must return. As with the body, the preservation of the *ba* after death is crucial to a beneficent afterlife in the Egyptian canon. The visual similarity of the *ba* and psyche, however, permits the interchange of images between the two dissimilar religious systems and permits one of the bilingual elements in Greek tombs.

The tombs in this study that I describe as bilingual or as bricolaged are not, I would argue, to any great degree, hybrid, nor are they the product of a hybrid culture.[20] Despite intermarriage, onomastic fluidity, and the interchange of cultural artifacts, both legal enjoinders and a strong cultural identification kept the two main constituencies that inhabit these pages separate insofar as their afterlife ambition is concerned. Egyptians had a millennium-long eschatological tradition that had served them remarkably well; Greeks, while perhaps more open to new ideas, had their social superiority at stake, and as much as they may have respected Egyptian tradition, they too had a strong eschatological heritage.[21] The interchange of visual material that occurs in the tombs in this volume is highly reflective and purposeful rather than merely a product of intermarriage or chance, and the intersection of Greek and Roman ideas is one in which the heritage of each group can be easily differentiated, rather than the fusion that hybridity implies.[22]

The fragmentary Rosetta Stone and other bilingual decrees stand as testimony that under Greek (and, though not legislatively, Roman) rule, Egypt was a bilingual

polity.[23] The Stone preserves part of a coronation decree for the young Ptolemy V that was destined to be erected in temples throughout Egypt, and it carries two languages and three scripts – Egyptian hieroglyphic for the gods and the Egyptian priests, Egyptian Demotic for literate Egyptians, and Greek for the administration and other literate Greeks.[24] Yet since relatively few Egyptians were literate,[25] the bilingualism of this decree and others like it must be taken metaphorically: the decree was not designed necessarily to be read, but to acknowledge the two major ethnic components of the polity. Nevertheless, some variation of bilingualism insofar as verbal interaction occurred: Egyptians who wished to deal with Greeks and the ruling administration had to learn the language of the conqueror, and, with the quotidian propinquity of Egyptians, ordinary Greek inhabitants of Egypt were soon familiar with the Egyptian language, too.[26]

It is abundantly clear that ordinary Greeks in Alexandria were adept at code-switching[27] insofar as visual imagery is concerned almost from the time of their immigration following Ptolemy's seizure of Egypt in 323 BCE, and this insertion of elements of Egyptian visual vocabulary by private citizens occurs most frequently in the mortuary realm; code-switching happens later in Egyptian tombs in the chora, yet also with purposeful intent.

The tombs chosen for this volume are limited to Graeco-Roman period tombs in Alexandria and the Egyptian chora whose eschatological programs are well enough preserved to permit interpretation.[28] Two seeming anomalous genres are also considered: first, the gravestones from Leontopolis are admitted to acknowledge the presence of Jews in Graeco-Roman Egypt, where they early on formed a large minority, and to simultaneously explain by implication why no monumental tombs that can be definitively identified as Jewish have been discovered; second, the poems written in the tomb of Isidora at Tuna el-Gebel are included to underscore by textual means the complicated relationship of the Greek and Egyptian strands that inform the tomb decoration. The volume itself is arranged thematically and, so far as possible, roughly chronologically. Within this thematic structure, because tombs at individual sites share commonalities, the material is further grouped by site.

Though to a great extent lost to the depredation of time and the degradation of modern incursion, these tombs repay close attention. They stand as monuments of a period in which two (or three) eschatologically and visually distinct cultures recognized similarities in their religious systems that permitted visual interchange and in which they embraced elements of each other's visual vocabulary to better engage their own journey to the afterlife.

ONE

Death, Bilingualism, and Biography in the 'Eventide' of Egypt

The Tomb of Petosiris and Its Afterlife

The tomb of Petosiris at Tuna el-Gebel (pl. 1), constructed shortly after Alexander the Great's conquest of Egypt in 332 BCE, endures as a remarkable monument. Strikingly well preserved, it nevertheless remains surprisingly understudied. Built "in order that [his] father's name be pronounced and that of [his] elder brother,"[29] the tomb also indelibly preserves the spokesman's own name and his prestige. Among the most immediately recognizable monuments in Egypt from the late-fourth century, the tomb that sheltered the body of Petosiris and his family is also among the most telling. The inscriptions and figurative reliefs activating the tomb walls provide the most complete document of eschatological expression in the interstice between the height of Egyptian power and the encroaching subjugation accompanying Greek and Roman rule. Its inscriptions furnish a handbook of religious thought and practice, preserving, in the words of Miriam Lichtheim, one of "the most elaborate statements of personal morality and philosophy that [has] survived from the Late Period,"[30] while its reliefs provide Petosiris' biography in visual form. Later, when Petosiris had achieved the status of a hero and the tomb attracted both Greek and Egyptian pilgrims, on it one worshiper recorded the most ancient Greek epigram in Egypt to address immortality.[31] The tomb's figurative reliefs signal the tomb, in both subject and style, as the earliest mortuary monument to acknowledge the presence of Greeks in Egypt visually,[32] as they herald the interaction between Greeks and Egyptians that – lasting for more than five centuries – greatly enriched each community's visualization of their negotiation with death. Yet despite the stylistic and conceptual nod to Greece, the reliefs and inscriptions explicate the continuity of Egyptian eschatological thought and practice in the period after the Macedonian conquest of Egypt.

GREEKS AND EGYPTIANS

Interchange between Greeks and Egyptians had been initiated long before the conquest of Egypt by Alexander the Great. Homer considered that Bronze Age Greeks who fought in the Trojan War knew Egypt,[33] and – if the historicity of the Trojan War itself remains unproven – Mycenaean pottery found especially in Upper Egypt[34] and wall paintings executed by Minoan artists that

decorated the walls of the Eighteenth-Dynasty palace at Avaris[35] and other evidence[36] preserve interaction between Aegeans and Egyptians as early as the Bronze Age.

Herodotus (II.152–154)[37] records that the first Greeks (Carians and Ionians, according to Diodorus Siculus I.66.12) entered Egypt during the reign of Psammetichos I (664–610 BCE), offering themselves as mercenaries to the king as he reclaimed Egypt for the Egyptians. Acknowledging their assistance, he settled them on the Pelusian branch of the Nile at Tel Defenneh in the eastern Delta, which remained a Greek guardpost. Finds of early Greek pottery from the site of Naukratis, however – *pace* Herodotus (II.178) – permit that Naukratis, a Greek emporium on the Canopic branch of the Nile eighty-three kilometers southeast of Alexandria, may have been established at this early date as well,[38] as Diodorus (I.67.8–9) implies, when he writes that "Psammetichos . . . was the first Egyptian king to open to other nations the trading-places throughout the rest of Egypt and to offer a large measure of security to strangers from across the seas."[39] The suggestion of seventh-century interaction by Diodorus is borne out by archaeology. Though Greek pottery is found in Egypt at least as early as the eighth century BCE,[40] the proliferation of Greek finds occurs from the mid-seventh century on. Aside from Naukratis, seventh-century Greek pottery has also been found at Memphis and its necropolis Saqqarah.[41] Saqqarah also provides the earliest nonceramic Greek object found in Egypt, a bronze griffin protome, dated about 650 BCE, that once graced a bronze cauldron manufactured on the East Greek island of Samos.[42] The greater amount of Greek pottery in Egypt dates to the last quarter of the century. Most comes from Naukratis;[43] Tel Defenneh, the fort in the Delta, has yielded some,[44] as have the Memphis area and that of Thebes in Upper Egypt.[45]

Greeks entered Egypt as mercenaries and settled as entrepreneurs, but they also visited as sightseers, and they used Egyptian models as instruction for their earliest large-scale sculpture, though they changed aspects of Egyptian form and iconography to fit needs of their own.[46] From the Greek world, finds from sites on Samos and from the city of Miletus and elsewhere[47] and the technique of faience, probably introduced from Egypt,[48] document this interchange. Egyptian religion penetrated Greece as well: by the fourth century BCE and perhaps as early as the late fifth[49] – though initially constructed for the succor of Egyptian sailors – the Egyptian deity Isis had a temple in the Piraeus, the port of Athens.

The fifth and fourth centuries BCE witnessed complicated military alliances between Greece and Egypt, as both polities attempted to repel the advancing Persians. When the Persians under Cambyses conquered Egypt in 525 BCE, Greeks – especially Athenians – rightly wary of the power rising in the East, joined Egypt in an attempt to overthrow the invaders and, after Greece itself had been invaded by the Persians, Greeks were even more eager to come to Egypt's aid. Between 462 and 459 BCE, both Cyreneans and Athenians supported the Egyptian Inaros, who held Marea, forty kilometers to the southwest of where Alexandria would be founded (Thucydides I.104). An initial victory was short-lived, however, ending in a disastrous defeat in 454, and Egypt remained under Persian rule, except for part of the Delta held by Amyrtaeus of Sais (Thucydides I.109–110). Finally, in 449 BCE, the Athenian commander Kimon sent a squadron to support Amyrtaeus (Thucydides I.112), who won Egypt's independence from the Persians.

Alliances persisted. Between 385 and 383, Athenian mercenaries assisted the pharaoh Achoris and successfully defended Egypt against reconquest by the Persians (Isocrates 4.140). In 361, Spartans, aided by Athenian mercenaries, joined the pharaoh Tachos (also known as Teos and Djedhor) again against Persia, but that campaign ended disastrously.[50] Then, when Persia sought to reconquer Egypt in 351 BCE, Athenians and Spartans again assisted Nectanebo II (360–343 BCE), the last native Egyptian king, in his stand against Artaxerxes III, and in the last campaign against Artaxerxes in 344/43 BCE, Athenians and Spartans once more arrived to direct what proved to be the unsuccessful defense of the Delta. Persia triumphed, and Artaxerxes III ruled Egypt.[51]

Such was the situation before the conquest of Egypt by Alexander the Great in 332 BCE. Greeks and Egyptians intersected and interacted both in mainland Greece and on Egyptian soil, but it was after Alexander's death, with the subsequent rule of the Macedonian Ptolemies and the later conquest by Roman forces, that Greek visual culture had its greatest impact on Egyptian modes of representation.

THE SETTING OF THE TOMB OF PETOSIRIS

Enfolded by the desert and shielded by the relative anonymity of Middle Egypt, the tomb of Petosiris stands in the southern necropolis of the Graeco-Roman

metropolis of Hermopolis Magna. It was the focal point of the cemetery in the Ptolemaic period, when it welcomed pilgrims who worshiped Petosiris, the builder and one of the occupants of the tomb, and it served as a magnet in the Roman period for the dead who aspired to burial adjacent to the hero. The tomb of Petosiris is the benefactor of the earliest excavation at the site and of its resulting magisterial publication by Gustave Lefebvre.[52]

The ancient city of Hermopolis Magna rises from a flood plain reaching to the western mountains. It is about eleven kilometers west of the modern village of el-Ashmunein, which retains the original name of the city, called by the Egyptians Khemenu (or Khmun), 'the Eight,' which refers to the ogdoad that preceded the creation of the world.[53]

Unlike other Egyptian creation accounts, the Hermopolitan tradition envisions the primordial soup inhabited by four couples who make up the ogdoad. The four male deities were frog-headed, and, with their snake-headed female consorts, they swam in the primeval ooze of chaos before the beginning of the world. Each pair, who are named and differentiated only from the Twenty-sixth Dynasty on, represent a concept describing the world before the creation: Nun and his consort Naunet, the primeval ocean; Heh and his consort Hauhet, infinity; Kek and Kauket, darkness; and Amun and Amaunet, the hidden.[54] From the union of these eight elements (or in another account, from the Great Cackler or Honker[55]) emerged the primordial egg from which the light of the sun materialized (or, in perhaps a more metaphoric version, the egg that hatched the sun god).[56] And it was near the Great Pond at Hermopolis, according to an inscription from the tomb of Petosiris, that half the egg was buried.[57]

Though his relationship with the ogdoad is not entirely clear, the fifth god mentioned in the hymn is presumably Djehuty, who later, under the Greek name Thoth, calls himself "the lord of the eight gods [of Hermopolis]" and who finally eclipsed 'the Eight.'[58] Thoth was a moon god,[59] a god of wisdom and of knowledge, and a deity well versed in the arts of magic. The deity is represented in two analogous lunar-related aspects: as an ibis and as a baboon. At Hermopolis, he received the epithet "three time great," *trismegistus*, which was adopted by its eponymous deity when the city was hellenized.[60]

Greeks equated Thoth with Hermes, and this connection yielded the hellenized name of the site, which was surnamed 'Magna' to differentiate it from Hermopolis (Parva) in the Delta.[61] Hermopolis Magna was the capital of the fifteenth nome of Upper Egypt – the Hare nome – a city with metropolitan status and a major religious center in the pharaonic period. Its religious importance continued though the Roman period, as did its political importance, and in the first century CE, Pliny (*NH* V.XI.61) cites "the town of Mercury" among the few Egyptian cities worth noting. Hermopolis Magna remained important in the Late Antique. With the rise of Neoplatonism in Alexandria in the third century CE, when Hermes was surnamed Trismegistus, it became a very active center.[62] Tuna el-Gebel, which assumes its name from one of the nearby villages, denominates the southern necropolis of Hermopolis Magna. With the tomb of Petosiris as its focal point, it was a major pilgrimage site for both Egyptians and Greeks in antiquity.[63]

Continued temple building at the site indicates the importance and longevity of Hermopolis Magna and the cult of Thoth. As the eponymous deity, Thoth received glorious temples from at least the New Kingdom onward. Two extant massive red quartzite statues of cynocephalic Thoth, each about 4.5 meters high and dating to the New Kingdom reign of Amenhotep III (1390–1352),[64] must have graced his temple, which was one of the largest in Egypt,[65] and Rameses II (1279–1213) added a pylon that led into the precinct of the god.[66] In the Late Period, Nectanebo I (380–362 BCE) – who had a particular fondness for Hermopolis Magna apparently because its populace had assisted him in his coup against Nepherites II (379/378 BCE), the last pharaoh of the Twenty-ninth Dynasty – architecturally embellished the sanctuary. Early in his reign, Nectanebo added the so-called sphinx gate, enlarging the gateway to the sanctuary marked by the Ramesside pylon and built a temple for Nehemet-'awy, Thoth's consort. Later, he even more greatly enlarged the sacred precinct by building a huge enclosure wall and a new gateway, demolishing the New Kingdom Temple, and founding a new temple to Thoth, incorporating blocks from the earlier temple and burying the colossal statues to Thoth in its foundations.[67] The pronaos of Nectanebo's temple was completed early in the reign of Ptolemy I,[68] and the plan of the temple provided the model for the tomb of Petosiris. Later Greek and Roman rulers constructed further additions, and finally a Christian basilica was built on the site that incorporated blocks from the earlier buildings.[69]

THE TOMB OF PETOSIRIS

In his long biography, carved on the wall of the tomb (here greatly abridged),[70] Petosiris, high priest of Thoth at Hermopolis Magna, describes his lineage and his role:

> (1) . . . beloved younger son [of Neshu],[71] owner of all his property, the Great one of the Five, the master of the (holy) seats, the high priest who sees the god in his shrine . . . born of the lady Nefer-renpet.[72]

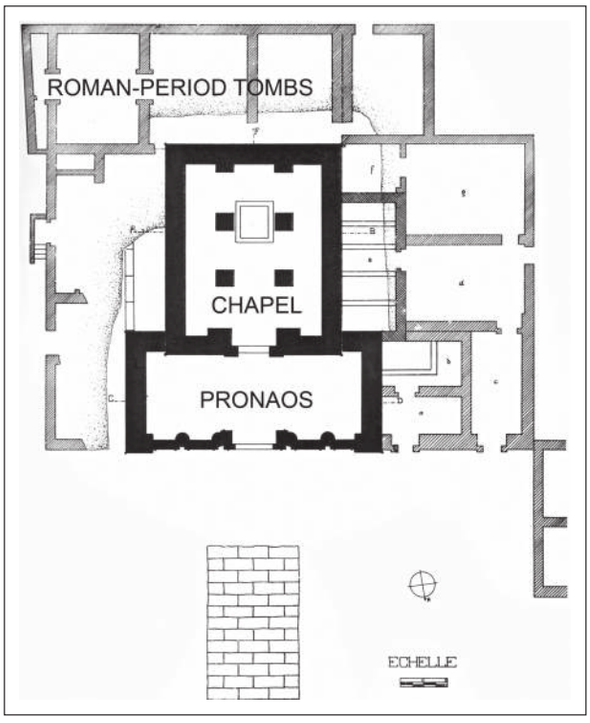
Petosiris continues:

> (10) . . . I built this tomb in this necropolis,
> Beside the great souls who are there,
> In order that my father's name be pronounced,
> And that of my elder brother,
> A man is revived when his name is pronounced![73]

The tomb of Petosiris is loosely dated to the last quarter of the fourth century BCE based on Petosiris' biographical inscription:[74]

> (26) I spent seven years as controller for this god,
> Administering his endowment without fault being found,
> While the Ruler-of-foreign-lands was Protector in Egypt,
> And nothing was in its former place,
> Since fighting had started (30) inside Egypt,
> The South being in turmoil, the North in revolt;
> The people walked with [head turned back (?)],
> All temples were without their servants,
> The priests fled, not knowing what was happening.[75]

In the tradition of fortuity acting as the greatest boon to archaeology, an astonishing request from a local resident yielded the discovery of the tomb of Petosiris. In the waning days of November 1919, a resident of the town of el-Ashmunein petitioned the Service des Antiquités for a six-day excavation of a "temple" he had discovered at the site now known as Tuna el-Gebel. His request was summarily dismissed, but the chance corroboration of the 'temple' by a farmer from the rival town of Tuna el-Gebel finally persuaded the first informant to lead the inspector billeted at Minya, Antun Youssef, to the site. Youssef made a preliminary investigation on December 27, which uncovered one corner of the monument, and Lefebvre completed the tomb's excavation and recording.[76] Lefebvre's three volumes, published in 1923 and 1924, remain the authoritative source for the monument, although the best images are found in the more recent publication by Nadine Cherpion and her colleagues.[77]



1.1. Tuna el-Gebel, Tomb of Petosiris, Plan (after Lefebvre 1923–1924, vol. III, pl. I)

The tomb of Petosiris does indeed resemble an Egyptian temple, and Thirtieth Dynasty temples – most conspicuously the temple of Thoth at Hermopolis built by Nectanebo I – served as the model for its facade.[78] A horned altar (of later date) precedes the tomb, and a paved 'avenue' leads toward its facade.[79] Oriented north to south, the tomb is composed of two rooms, a chapel that is almost square[80] and the horizontally elongated pronaos fronting it (Fig. 1.1). The chapel is dedicated to Petosiris' father and elder brother, the pronaos is the realm of Petosiris himself, and the two spaces are visually differentiated.

Lefebvre[81] deduces the pronaos as a later addition to the monument because its short back walls abut the facade of the chapel about a third of a meter behind the chapel's face and because the pronaos extends farther to the east and west than the chapel. Yet two other tombs belie Lefebvre's interpretation. Near the tomb of Petosiris, both the tomb of Djedthothiufankh,[82] Petosiris' elder brother,[83] and the tomb of Petekakem (also Padykam and Padikem), an official in charge of Hermopolis Magna's animal sanctuary,[84] assume a similar plan. Perhaps even more telling, the plan also proves typical for the pronaoi

of contemporaneous temples – most cogently that of Nectanebo relatively recently constructed on the site – in which the relationship of the two spaces, according to Dieter Arnold, is intended to "clearly express [their] independence."[85] Thus the style of the decoration in the tomb of Petosiris that also visually distinguishes the two rooms follows the intention of the temple plan. No compelling reason demands that the building itself was constructed in two phases, and it is much more likely that the construction of the two rooms was contemporaneous.

Nevertheless, despite the presumed contemporaneity of its two rooms, the difference in visually identifiable stylistic models for the chapel and the pronaos is one of the most distinctive aspects of the tomb. The reliefs of the chapel are Egyptian both in content and in style (or as 'Egyptian' as any style can be in Egypt in the fourth century BCE), whereas the pronaos carries reliefs that permit the monument to serve as the earliest evidence of Greek stylistic incursion into funerary art in the *chora*. Two points can be made here, which will be addressed at length later and reiterated in ensuing chapters. The first is that subject matter and the style in which it is portrayed appear carefully chosen in the tombs of Graeco-Roman Egypt to empower the eschatological meaning of the imagery; the second is that the disjunction in either style or content (or both) – seen most clearly between the outer and inner rooms in the tomb of Petosiris – is a normal expectation in Graeco-Roman tombs throughout Egypt, where it also speaks to an intentionality in furthering eschatological goals.

Despite its obvious allusion to a temple, the tomb of Petosiris follows the traditional formal arrangement of an Egyptian tomb, composed as it is of a chapel and a pronaos with the burial chamber below the chapel. And despite the disparity of style between the chapel and the pronaos, the tomb's decoration also adheres to traditional Egyptian subjects and their placement, insofar as possible, given the tomb's triple dedication.

The Chapel

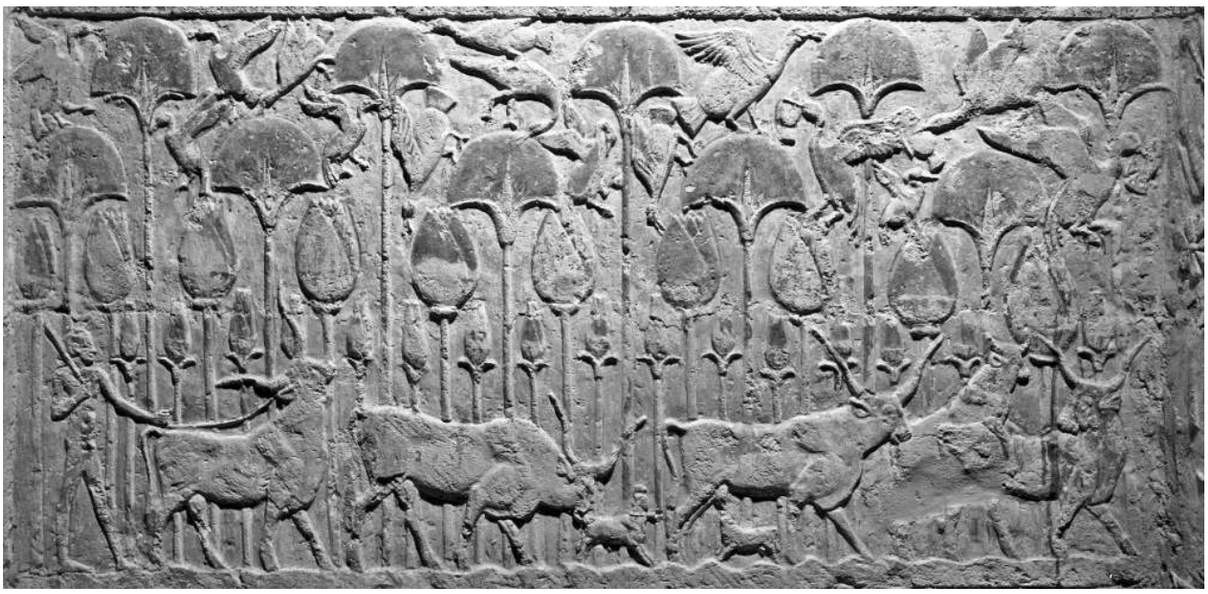
The chapel is the heart of the tomb. It is centered on the shaft that leads to the burial chambers below the building that contained the sarcophagus of Petosiris and members of his family.[86] The chamber is divided longitudinally into three nearly equal parts by two rows of pillars that correspond to pilasters on its north and south walls. Though many of the inscriptions in the chapel extol the tomb's builder Petosiris, the chamber is titularly dedicated to his father, Neshu, and his brother, Djedthothiufankh, who equally share the space. The eastern part of the room is given over to inscriptions and reliefs honoring Neshu and the western part to those celebrating Djedthothiufankh, both of whom, like Petosiris, were also priests of Thoth.

The organization of both the pictorial and epigraphical programs is brilliantly conceived and is structured by the carefully considered arrangement seen in earlier Egyptian tombs.[87] The walls are each divided into four friezes, with the register scheme observing the traditional format for Egyptian tomb imagery, which maintains ma'at "in this world and the next."[88] All friezes carry figures, with the two middle registers – those nearest eye level – also replete with inscriptions. The east (left) and west (right) walls are considered geographically as well as metaphorically (the more common consideration[89]), with the east wall that honors Neshu relating the more terrestrial-bound ritual of the Egyptian funeral, while the west wall that honors his son Djedthothiufankh generally addresses the negotiation of the afterlife.[90] In addition, each wall incorporates a spatially considered vertical arrangement in which the imagery accelerates from the terrestrial in the lowest register to the more actively celestial above. Concurrently, as is traditional in Egyptian funerary chapels,[91] the figures in the reliefs on the lateral walls draw the visitor's eye into the tomb, here toward the south wall, which is the focal point of the chapel shared by both beneficiaries and which provides the culmination of the scenes on the lateral walls.

The Walls Devoted to Neshu

The east side of the north wall and the east wall (as well as the east side of the south wall) are dedicated to Neshu. On the wall to the east of the entrance only three registers are fully preserved, but the preserved friezes nevertheless provide the type of imagery normally seen at the entrance to the tomb. In the uppermost register, the family of Neshu greets the visitor. The goddess Nut, standing in front of a sycamore tree,[92] pours water from an offering vessel into small cups that Neshu, his wife, and two children – each of whom is seated on one of the couple's laps – hold out to her (Pl. II). The married couple sit on elaborate animal-footed stools and rest their feet on blocks. They each wear a wig and a long white garment, and their heads support perfumed cones in a scene treated in traditional Egyptian manner.

In the register below, Petosiris pays homage to his deceased father (Pl. III). The two men pull about them



1.2. Tuna el-Gebel, Tomb of Petosiris, Chapel, the East Side of the North Wall, Lower Register (German Archaeological Institute, Cairo F-23316)

long, full garments over which they have thrown a shorter garment with a serrated edge.[93] The garment is current in Ptolemaic Egypt, but here it is described in a thoroughly egyptianized style – flat and stiff and lacking the folds expected in a Greek rendering – in a nevertheless rare nod to the contemporaneous world in the chapel.[94] In the inscription set between the two figures, Neshu blesses Petosiris, "May water be given to you from the two hands of Nut, at the sycamore tree," referring, in part, to Chapter 59 of the *Book of the Dead*,[95] an appeal that often accompanies the vignette of Nut and the sycamore tree, as seen in the upper register, on the one hand, and that is specifically tied to Hermopolis Magna in the *Book of the Dead*, on the other: "O thou sycamore of Nut, mayest thou give me water and the breath that is in thee. It is I who occupy this seat in the midst of Hermopolis. I have guarded this egg of the Great Honker. If it grows; I grow; If it lives; I live; If it breathes air; I breathe air."[96]

The lowest register of the east side of the north wall (Fig. 1.2)[97] shows a scene familiar from traditional Egyptian tombs and one that is frequently inscribed on the north wall of the chapel:[98] cattle provide the activity in the foreground of a marshy swamp replete with water plants – papyruses and lotuses – as ducks and geese snatch fish out of the murky water. The cattle, however, provide not only a narrative but – echoing the vision of the tomb, itself – speak to generation and continuity, as well as the more commonly construed reproduction, fertility, and regeneration:[99] at the far right a bull mounts a cow; behind them, a newborn suckles at its mother's teat; next a cow licks its calf, which is slightly older than the suckling one; and finally, a nude youth restrains another bovid.

The long east wall dedicated to Neshu describes his funeral. The uppermost register, which shows the funerary ceremony as it moves toward the south end, is divided horizontally, before it culminates with the lustration of the mummy before the tomb, which spans the height of both registers (Fig. 1.3). In this large panel at the south end of the wall, a *sem*-priest stands on a high podium finished off with a cavetto cornice and accessed by a flight of miniature stairs. He holds a small vessel in his raised hands and pours water over the mummy that stands before him. He is identified as Teos, the grandson of Neshu. Directly behind the mummy of Neshu is a tomb capped with a pyramidion and indicated as cut into the sandy hillside. The tomb in the relief bears no resemblance to the tomb of Petosiris, as Lefebvre notes.[100] It is, however, a simulacrum of tombs depicted in the same lustration ceremony on papyri of the *Book of the Dead* and elsewhere,[101] and the relief takes advantage of these earlier models.[102]

Immediately behind Teos, in the upper register of the two spanned by the lustration scene, four priests approach (see Fig. 1.3). The first holds an incense burner, the