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The Tomb from Tigrane Pasha Street and the Iconography of Death in Roman Alexandria

MARJORIE SUSAN VENIT

Abstract

In this article the author argues that a tomb from Tigrane Pasha Street in Alexandria, which is dated by the architectural conceit of its decorated central dome to the Hadrianic period, is a tangible consequence of the interwoven strands of social and cultural ideologies that shaped Roman Alexandria. It is furthermore proposed that the Classical, Egyptian, and notably Alexandrian elements that the tomb incorporates in its decorative program have their basis in a social construct specific to Roman Alexandria and that these elements can be interpreted to illuminate aspects of the religious life of the city in the second century A.D.

The Tigrane Tomb, which was uncovered in 1952 and initially published by Achille Adriani, presents a program contradictory in both style and iconography: on the one hand, the figures and narrative scenes on the walls of the triclinium-shaped chamber depict Egyptianized figures that assume an Egyptianizing style; on the other hand, the domed ceiling shows a central gorgoneion set amid foliage and agile animals treated in a Classical manner. It is here argued that these iconographic and stylistic differences denote ideological choices rather than merely dissimilar workshops. More-

over, it is proposed that the tomb stands as a monument to the cult of Isis and, because of its unified program and triclinium format, it is further conjectured that the Tigrane Tomb was the burial place for members of an Isiac dining guild.*

Paradigmatic of the social diversity, religious interchange, and shared cultural values that created Roman Alexandria, a tomb from Tigrane Pasha Street is a tangible consequence of the intricately interwoven strands of social and cultural ideologies that shaped that city. The tomb was discovered by chance in March 1952 during digging for the foundations of a building in the quarter of Cleopatra-les-Bains to the east of modern Alexandria.¹ It was then excavated by Achille Adriani who published it as an "ipogeo dipinto della Via Tigrane Pascià."² The street, which has been a section of Port Said Street since 1952, was named after one of Viceroy Mohamed Tewfik's ministers in the last quarter of the 19th cen-

* I would like to thank Ahmed Kadry, Chairman of the Egyptian Antiquities Organization at the time of my fieldwork, the Permanent Committee, and Doreya Said, Director of the Graeco-Roman Museum in Alexandria at that time, for permission to study and record the tombs of Alexandria, and Ahmed Abdel Fattah for generously sharing with me photographs of the recently excavated tomb at Gabbari. Discussions with Mervat Seif el Din of the Graeco-Roman Museum and Jean-Yves Empereur, Director of the Centre d'Études Alexandrines, have added greater richness to this manuscript, although I do not think that either scholar agrees fully with my interpretation or conclusions. I also would like to acknowledge two of my seminar students, Amy Day and Elissa Auther, whose perceptive observations I have incorporated into this article. The cogent comments of the two scholars who reviewed this article for *AJA*—Alix Barbet and Robert Steven Bianchi—and of Fred Kleiner also saved me from error, although I take full responsibility for the thoughts and conclusions stated here. Furthermore, I'd like to thank Katherine Hays for her technical assistance and Tracey Cullen for her editorial expertise. A generous grant from the University of Maryland Graduate Research Board provided travel funds for the completion of the article. Finally, this article was written using the resources of the libraries of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, the Graeco-Roman Museum in Alexandria, the Center for Hellenic Studies in Washington, D.C., the University of Maryland,

and the Institute of Fine Arts of New York University, and I thank the librarians of all these institutions.

The following abbreviations are used below:

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| Adriani 1956 | A. Adriani, "Ipogeo dipinto della Via Tigrane Pascià," <i>Bulletin de la Société archéologique d'Alexandrie</i> 41 (1956) 63–86. |
| Adriani 1961 | A. Adriani, <i>Repertorio d'arte dell'Egitto greco-romano</i> , ser. A, I (Palermo 1961). |
| Adriani 1966 | A. Adriani, <i>Repertorio d'arte dell'Egitto greco-romano</i> , ser. C, I–II (Palermo 1966). |
| BSAA | <i>Bulletin de la Société archéologique d'Alexandrie</i> . |

¹ Adriani 1956, 63. According to Adriani, the tomb was not an isolated hypogeum, but part of a vast necropolis, destroyed partly in antiquity and partly in modern times. Its plan, however, shows it as an independent and self-contained unit.

² Adriani 1956. See also *FA* 6 (1951) 274, no. 3463; C. Picard, "Hypogée alexandrin de la rue Tigrane-Pacha reconstitué à Kom-el-Chogafa (Alexandrie)," *RA* 1965, 95–100; Adriani 1966, I, 145–46, no. 91. The tomb has gained subsequent mention in volumes devoted to Roman painting, e.g., H. Mielsch, "Wandmalerei der Prinzipatszeit," *ANRW* II.12.2 (Berlin 1981) 246; and R. Ling, *Roman Painting* (Cambridge 1991) 183–84, fig. 200.

ture.³ The location of the tomb on the extension of Tigrane Pasha Street places it very close to the well-known Ptolemaic tomb complex of Moustafa Kamel (Pasha)⁴ and other tombs of the Ptolemaic period.

Cut into the soft limestone bedrock that forms the great spur of land stretching west along the Mediterranean from the Canopic mouth of the Nile, the Tigrane Tomb consisted of two rooms axially disposed to either side of a central entrance hall: one room was fitted with *loculi*—the deep, neatly cut, rectangular niches, often with vaulted ceilings and, in an earlier period, covered with painted slabs—and the other was furnished with sarcophagi and decorated with paintings. A short covered staircase led down from the surface to the entrance hall, entering it on one of its long sides (fig. 1). To the right of the central hall was a room cruciform in plan: one of the short arms of the cross is formed by the entrance hall, and the other three by arched niches (*arcosolia*) cut from the living rock to permit the rock-cut sarcophagi to emerge below. These coffins must have held the remains of the primary recipients of the tomb, as must the two *loculi* cut into the lateral walls of the central niche. The rectangular room to the left of the entrance hall was provided with more *loculi*, cut in neat tiers, to house other bodies. This chamber was left in situ after its plan had been drawn,⁵ but the painted room was carefully removed and installed in an archaeological park that had been created around the catacombs at Kom el-Shoqafa in the center of modern Alexandria.⁶

The Tigrane Tomb is a social construct specific to Roman Alexandria, its type unique both to time and topos. The strength, and defining factor, of ancient Alexandria was its polyglot culture. Ptolemy

I had settled his army there, and Alexandria's population was quickly comprised of immigrants from the entire Greek world, native Egyptians, Syrians, Persians, Gauls, and Jews;⁷ by the second century A.D. Alexandria was home to peoples from all over the known world. Initially the various ethnic groups were rigorously segregated, since senior posts in the civil administration and military were reserved for Macedonians and Greeks. Only Greeks were permitted to become citizens, and intermarriage between Greeks and non-Greeks was forbidden. It was difficult, however, to maintain the rigid segregation of Greeks and Egyptians, since Ptolemaic society was marked not only by ethnic divisions, but also by social stratification, and social stratification became the decisive factor. In the chora, intermarriage between Greeks and Egyptians was common, and even in Alexandria intermarriage occurred. A pragmatic Hellenization was common among the Egyptian elite and, for their part, Greeks adopted aspects of Egyptian culture. In order to compete in the bureaucracy, Egyptians assumed Greek names and learned and spoke Greek, which served as the lingua franca. Egyptians occasionally made use of Greek law, but Greek law, too, shows traces of Egyptian judicial procedures.⁸ The tombs of Alexandria show Egyptian influences almost from their inception; common by the second century B.C., Egyptianizing elements are fully integrated by the first century.

During the almost 600 years that Alexandria was among the most influential cities in the ancient world, this complex, cosmopolitan society developed new idioms with which to express its changing aspirations. Reflecting the historical reality of Alexandria, the Tigrane Tomb incorporates specifically Alexandrian,

³ I would like to thank Jean-Yves Empereur for this information and for many stimulating discussions about the Tigrane Tomb and other aspects of ancient Alexandria.

⁴ See the map in *Guide plan général d'Alexandria de Dekhela à Montazah*, revised in 1937 by A. Nicosoff. For the tomb complex at Moustapha Pasha (now called Moustapha Kamel), see A. Adriani, *La nécropole de Moustafa Pacha* (Annuaire du Musée Gréco-Romain 1933–1934, 1934–1935).

⁵ It measured 3.5 × 2.3 m. The plan shows nine ranges of *loculi*, although how many *loculi* were in each tier went unrecorded. Adriani 1956, 64 does note, however, that the regularity of their arrangement indicates that they were part of the original construction of the tomb, and since *loculi* are frequently arrayed in neat ranges three *loculi* high (cf., e.g., the Tomb from Antoniadis Garden [Adriani 1966, I, 143, no. 90; II, pl. 64, fig. 219], the Great Hypogeum of Mex (or Wardian) [Adriani 1966, I, 162, no. 118; II, pl. 87, fig. 295], and the *loculi* at Ras el-Tin [Adriani 1966, I, 188, no. 134; II, pl. 106, fig. 361]), we might postulate 27 *loculi*.

⁶ For the catacomb complex, see its initial publication in T. Schreiber, *Expedition Ernst Sieglin: Ausgrabungen in Alexandria. Die Nekropole von Kôm-esch-Schukâfa I* (Leipzig 1908); and most recently J.-Y. Empereur, *A Short-Guide to the Catacombs of Kom el Shoqafa Alexandria* (Alexandria 1995), who also includes a discussion of the Tigrane Tomb (22–25).

⁷ See, e.g., Strabo 17.1.12. A. Enklaar, "Chronologie et peintures des hydries de Hadra," *BABesch* 60 (1985) 145 and map, p. 146, bases his conclusions on the findspots of vases and on the inscriptions on vases that mention the origin of the deceased; he identifies "crowds" of Cretans and Cypriots, fewer Athenians, Cyrenaicans, Rhodians, Celts, Persians, Lebanese, Koans, Chians, Samothracians, Acarnanians, Aetolians, Boeotians, Eretrians, and Keans among the early population of Alexandria.

⁸ See K.A.D. Smelik and E.A. Hemelrijk, "Egyptian Animal Worship in Antiquity," *ANRW* II.17.4 (Berlin 1984) 1885–91 and bibliography.

generically Classical, and—most markedly—Roman and Egyptian (or Egyptianizing) elements into its architectural design and pictorial program.

ARCHITECTURAL FORMS OF ALEXANDRIAN TOMBS

Almost from the foundation of the city in 331 B.C., Alexandrians buried their dead in monumental tombs cut into the soft bedrock outside the city walls. Thus, as a monumental private multiple-burial tomb cut vertically into the living rock with loculi for burials, the Tigrane Tomb is in the earlier Alexandrian Hellenistic tradition.

In the Hellenistic period, the monumental Alexandrian tomb normally centered on a court recreating—sometimes conceptually, occasionally almost literally—a Hellenistic house. The court was cut vertically into the rock and often remained open to the sky. It was reached by a covered staircase cut down through the rock from the surface. When left uncovered, the court lent an unusually public aspect to the interior of the funerary monument by providing visual access to the tomb. Open or covered, it served as a space in which to perform burial and commemorative rites for successive generations—or unrelated family groups⁹—entombed within the vaults. The court provided access to rock-cut burial chambers furnished with rock-cut *klinai* for the laying out of the body and provided with multiple loculi cut into the walls for the burial of the deceased.

Loculi seem to be a purely Alexandrian development and mark the Alexandrian tomb type. They are found elsewhere, but invariably later, and in places where the style of tomb is clearly influenced by Alexandria. *Klinai*, however, are represented as early as the Geometric period on Greek funerary vessels, since the bier they constituted was the focal point of the domestic mourning ritual. With the development of the Greek monumental tomb—particularly in Macedonia—the *kline*, either made of wood or monumentalized in stone, became an integral part of the tomb furnishings. In early Alexandrian house-tombs it appears as a normal component, serving

as either the focal point of the tomb, or as a subsidiary visual element. On these *klinai* the dead must have laid in state for the funerary ritual, much as they did in eighth-century Greece. The general conception, then, of the Tigrane Tomb as a rock-cut house-tomb with its simulated *klinai*, and specifically, with its inclusion of loculi, issues from this early Alexandrian tradition.

Unique to the period of Roman Alexandria, however, is the rejection of the mimetic elements that mark the earlier *klinai* and the substitution of motifs that indicate their role as sarcophagi. In the case of the Tigrane Tomb, these elements consist of two plastic circular handles, a painted surface imitating richly colored stone, and painted garlands.¹⁰ In Roman Alexandria, it is not the simulation of the form but instead the configuration of the chamber that permits the identification of the sarcophagi as *klinai*. The burial chamber—as in the Tigrane Tomb—often assumes the form of the distinctive Roman triclinium, which derives its name from the three couches placed against its back and side walls. In the tombs, the triclinium takes the plan of a Greek cross, because of the three large *arcosolia* cut into the rock to accommodate the rock-cut *lenoi*—the bathtub-shaped sarcophagi—that substitute for the couches.

Unlike Greek *andrones*, on which they were loosely based, Roman triclinia were limited to three couches, each of which held up to three diners. The excavations at Pompeii have provided a number of different models, but in all the configurations the *klinai* fit closely around a central table that may be either round or rectangular.¹¹ There are no provisions for tables in the burial chamber of the Tigrane Tomb.

ARCHITECTURAL FORM OF THE TIGRANE TOMB

The plan of the funerary chamber places the Tigrane Tomb within a small group of extant Alexandrian tombs that base their burial chambers on the triclinium model. Most of these tombs, with the exception of the Tigrane Tomb, one chamber from Ramleh,¹² and a chamber found within a group of

⁹ For a relatively small tomb from the Ptolemaic period with burials of unrelated families, see the so-called Soldiers' Tomb (B.R. Brown, *Ptolemaic Paintings and Mosaics and the Alexandrian Style* [Cambridge, Mass. 1957] passim and esp. 5–20). Space in Roman tombs that housed a great number of dead was often sold to families unconnected to the one that originally built the tomb. See, e.g., J.M.C. Toynbee, *Death and Burial in the Roman World* (London 1971) 77–80.

¹⁰ Adriani 1956, 74 notes that the sarcophagi in the lateral niches imitate variegated red and yellow marble, and

that in the central niche imitates red granite or porphyry. The only sarcophagus that now preserves any of its decoration is the one in the right niche.

¹¹ For the form of the triclinium, see K. Dunbabin, "Triclinium and Stibadium," in W.J. Slater ed., *Dining in a Classical Context* (Ann Arbor 1991) 121–48; A. Wallace-Hadrill, "The Social Structure of the Roman House," *BSR* 56 (1988) 43–97.

¹² See E. Breccia, "Tombe greco-egiziane dell'età romana a Ramleh (Sporting Club)," *BSAA* 15 (1914) 53–56.

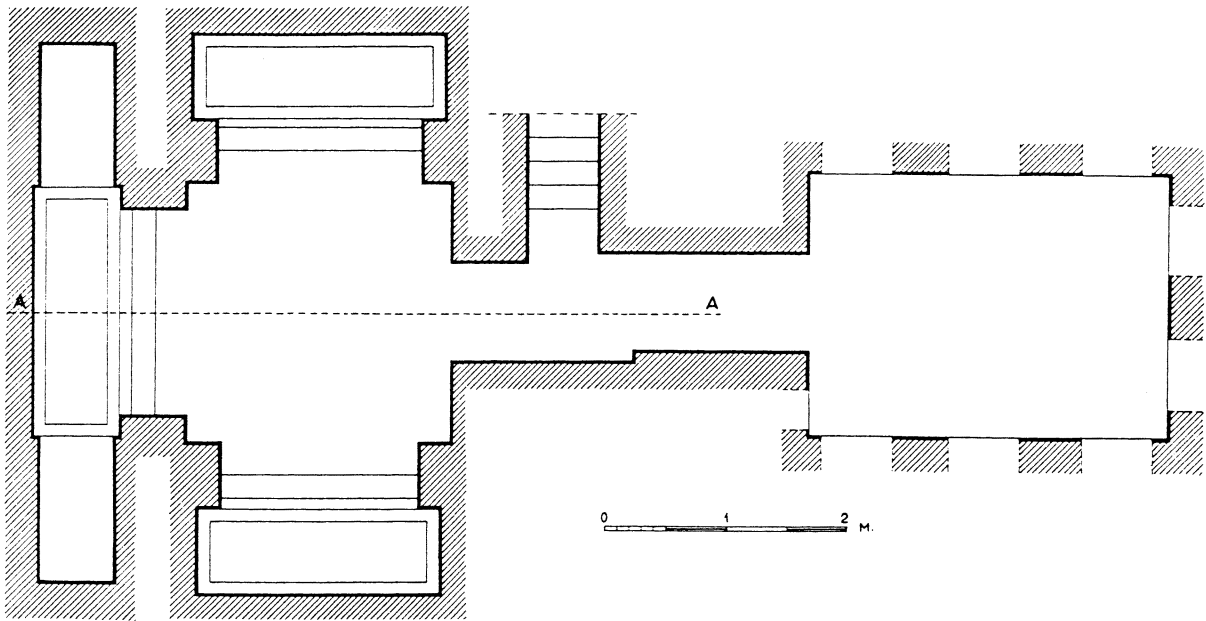


Fig. 1. Tigrane Tomb: Plan of the tomb as excavated. (After Adriani 1966, II, pl. 66, fig. 223)

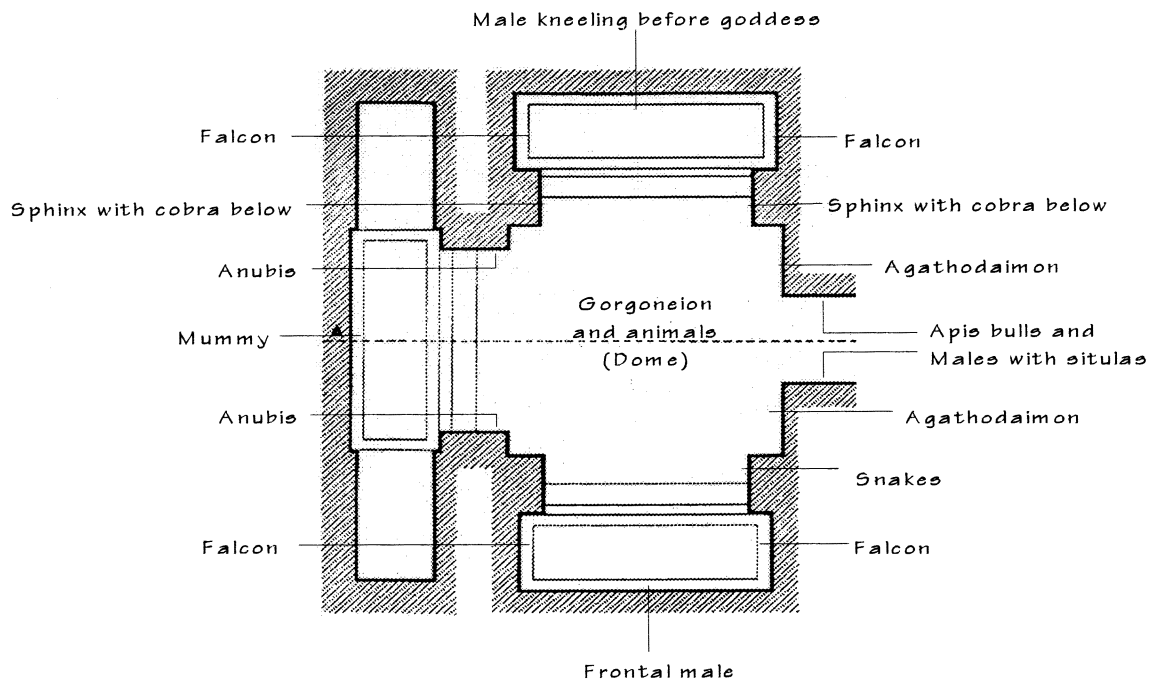


Fig. 2. Plan of the triclinium chamber, with subjects of the painted decoration indicated. (After Adriani 1966, pl. 66, fig. 223)

modest tombs from Sidi Gabr,¹³ are found in sections of the city in which the necropolises are primarily of Roman date: triclinium-shaped chambers are normal in the western necropolis and among the catacomb complex at Kom el-Shoqafa. Therefore, the location of the triclinium-shaped Tigrane Tomb—to the east of the city and, moreover, in the region of Cleopatra-les-Bains, which is honeycombed with tombs of the Ptolemaic period—remains exceptional, although not unique.¹⁴

All triclinium tombs that provide enough evidence to be dated¹⁵ are clearly of Roman Imperial date or later. The most problematic of the published triclinium tombs is that known as the Grand Catacomb from Wardian (or Mex). It is among those Alexandrian tombs first discovered¹⁶ and has remained among those best known—a huge and intricately conceived hypogeum cut into the rock to the west of the city near the sea. Pagenstecher¹⁷ dated the tomb to the Late Ptolemaic/Early Roman period, a date with which Noshy agreed.¹⁸ Adriani¹⁹ favored a date in the first two centuries of our era, which is accepted by both Fedak²⁰ and McKenzie.²¹ Pagenstecher's Hellenistic date can scarcely be defended. The size and execution of the Grand Catacomb at

Wardian certainly indicate a date in the Roman period, as McKenzie has pointed out.

The most recent datable tomb that shows a burial chamber in triclinium form is the Wescher Catacomb, discovered in the 19th century contiguous to the Great Catacombs at Kom el-Shoqafa. This catacomb, with its extensive Christian painted program, was found by Carl Wescher and its discovery first noted in the *Bullettino di archeologia cristiana* in 1864;²² it was published in the same journal in 1865.²³ The tomb is reached by two staircases at the south that open onto a large vestibule with an apse and an exedra at its west end. A narrow burial room with tiers of loculi extends from the vestibule toward the east, and a third chamber in triclinium form opens from the vestibule toward the north. The date of the initial construction of the tomb has been debated, but its paintings—which show images of Christian saints and scenes depicting the multiplication of the loaves and fishes, the marriage at Cana, and the sacred agape—leave its final phase beyond doubt.

The remaining datable tombs of triclinium form find a second parallel to the Tigrane Tomb in their Egyptianizing decoration. The most important of these tombs are the cruciform chamber from Ram-

¹³ See A. Adriani, "Scavi e scoperte alessandrine (1949–1952)," *BSAA* 41 (1956) 40–41, figs. 42–43. Adriani compares the chamber and its lenoi sarcophagi to the Tigrane Tomb.

¹⁴ Adriani 1966, I, 29 notes that garland sarcophagi—a type clearly Roman in date—have also been found to the east of the city. See, e.g., Adriani 1961, 23, no. 9, pl. 7.21 and 23 (Alexandria 22162: garland sarcophagus from Ibrahimiyah); 25, no. 13, pls. 10.30–31, 11.32–33, and 12.34–35 (Alexandria 24666: garland sarcophagus from Moustapha Pasha); 25, no. 15, pls. 13.38, 14.43–44, and 15.46 (Alexandria 22160: garland sarcophagus from Ibrahimiyah); 26, no. 18, pl. 15.45 and 48–50 (Alexandria 22161: garland sarcophagus from Ibrahimiyah).

¹⁵ Five of these tombs are known only from notes, photographs, or drawings preserved in the Graeco-Roman Museum in Alexandria. Of these five only one, securely dated by photographs of garland sarcophagi (see Adriani 1961, pl. 27, fig. 81 [misnumbered no. 33] and 31, no. 34 for one of these sarcophagi), is certainly of the Roman period, though it is most likely that all are, in fact, of Roman date or later. See Adriani 1966, I, 154, no. 100bis (tomb near Fort Saleh between the barracks of the Coast Guard and the sea); 154, no. 101 (tomb with garland sarcophagi from the Western Necropolis, referred to above); 155, no. 102 (known from an unpublished photograph; also from the Western Necropolis); 155, no. 103 (known from an unpublished drawing by Bartocci; also from the Western

Necropolis); 157, no. 109 (also known from an unpublished drawing by Bartocci; and from the Western Necropolis). Another triclinium tomb, set up in the garden of the Graeco-Roman Museum, is noted as coming from Wardian, also in the Western Necropolis.

¹⁶ See Adriani 1966, I, 162.

¹⁷ R. Pagenstecher, *Nekropolis: Untersuchungen über Gestalt und Entwicklung der alexandrinischen Grabanlagen und ihrer Malereien* (Leipzig 1919) 134–41 and fig. on 102.

¹⁸ I. Noshy, *The Arts of Ptolemaic Egypt* (London 1937) 35–36 dates it to the first century B.C.

¹⁹ Adriani 1966, I, 170.

²⁰ J. Fedak, *Monumental Tombs of the Hellenistic Age* (Toronto 1990) 129, where the necropolis at Mex is included among the western necropolises that "came more and more into use from the later second century onward."

²¹ J. McKenzie, *The Architecture of Petra* (Oxford 1990) 68. She notes its similarities to the "catacombs" in the Antoniadis Garden (H. Thiersch, *Zwei antike Grabanlagen bei Alexandria* [Berlin 1904] 6–10, pls. 4–6) and those at Kom el-Shoqafa (Schreiber [supra n. 6] passim).

²² *Bullettino di archeologia cristiana* 2 (1864) 88 in which de Rossi reported Wescher's publication of the inscriptions from the tomb in *ArchMiss* I (1864) 190.

²³ C. Wescher, "Notice sur une catacombe chrétienne à Alexandrie (Égypte)," *Bullettino di archeologia cristiana* 3 (1865) 57–64. See also T.D. Neroutsos, *L'ancienne Alexandrie* (Paris 1888) 41–54; and Adriani 1966, I, 184, no. 128.

leh,²⁴ the Main Tomb from the Great Catacombs at Kom el-Shoqafa,²⁵ and the Sieglin Tomb from the same site.²⁶

The Ramleh chamber was discovered in 1914 while digging a hole for the foundations of a house between the rail stations of Sporting Club and Cleopatra-les-Bains and a third of the way between the railway line and the sea, near the spot where the Tigrane Tomb was later found. The First World War made full publication of the tomb impossible, no illustrations were subsequently published, and the tomb has since been lost. Thus, Breccia's description is worth paraphrasing, as the tomb finds many affinities with the one from Tigrane Pasha Street.²⁷

Architecturally the two tombs are alike. The tomb from Ramleh consisted of a cruciform burial chamber forming a triclinium with plastered and painted sarcophagi, each of which had round handles—as in the Tigrane Tomb—represented on the front in relief. Above each sarcophagus, a deep loculus was cut in the center of the rear wall of the niche. Although unusual in their placement,²⁸ the Ramleh loculi intruded into the cruciform burial chamber much as did the two loculi cut into the lateral walls of the central niche in the Tigrane Tomb.

In addition to their relief ornament, the sarcophagi from both tombs bore painted decoration. A painted garland remains on one of the Tigrane sarcophagi, and the face of the sarcophagus in the east niche of the Ramleh tomb was divided into three panels, which bore painted inscriptions.²⁹

The disposition of the figural decoration in the Ramleh tomb corresponds generally to that of the Tigrane Tomb and to that of other Roman-period Alexandrian tombs. On the front surface of the pilasters flanking the east niche of the Ramleh tomb

were the remains of a figure painted in yellow, blue, and black, standing in profile and walking toward the outside, whose state of preservation did not permit its identification.³⁰ On the left wall of the niche, Horus with a human body and a falcon head, was shown in profile to right (that is, facing toward the back wall of the niche) holding an ankh in his left hand. On the opposite wall, in profile to left (also facing toward the back wall), was Thoth depicted with an ibis head. Between the two deities (that is, presumably on the back wall of the niche) a mummy lay on a lion-bed in profile to right. Behind the bed were the remains of the figure of Anubis. I return to this scene in the discussion of the iconography of the Tigrane Tomb.

The far niche of the Ramleh tomb preserved the most elaborate decoration. On the left half of the back wall were three seated deities (Osiris, Isis, Aton?) in front of whom a priestess sacrificed at an altar. On the right half was an analogous scene, but the priestess held a vase in one hand and in the other, an ankh. Behind the priestess was a siren (or, perhaps a soul bird?) set on a high base. On the right wall of the niche a deity was painted standing on a base. Painted on the vault of the niche, in vivid reds, blues, and yellows, were flowers and birds. All the plaster and concomitant painting in the west niche was lost.

Breccia dated the Ramleh tomb from the end of the first through the middle of the second century A.D. and compared it in its exquisite precision and skill to earlier Hellenistic painting from southern Russia published by Rostovtzeff.³¹ Presumably Breccia was comparing the Ramleh tomb's birds and flowers to those from southern Russia, since the Egyptianizing figures unquestionably find no comparanda

²⁴ See supra n. 12.

²⁵ Schreiber (supra n. 6) pls. 20–35; Adriani 1966, I, 173, no. 122, and for Main Tomb, see 175–77; Empereur (supra n. 6) 7–15.

²⁶ Adriani 1966, I, 178, no. 123, and esp. 180.

²⁷ The tomb from Ramleh is compared with the Tigrane Tomb by Adriani 1966, 145–46.

²⁸ A niche excavated in 1990 at Gabbari has a recessed panel in the back wall. When the loculus of the Ramleh tomb was covered with its slab, it may have resembled the back wall of the Gabbari tomb. See also the Thiersch Tomb from Sidi Gabr (or Cleopatra-les-Bains), dated to the Ptolemaic period, which has a kline centered on the back wall with a loculus cut into the wall above the kline: Thiersch (supra n. 21) 2–6, fig. 3, and pls. 2–3.

²⁹ In the central panel a stele was painted in the form of a pseudo-naiskos with a triangular pediment. On this

stele was a long inscription that had disappeared by the time of its discovery. In the panel to the left of the stele, above a figure of which only a few fragments remained, ΣΑΠΦΩ was inscribed. It was not possible to see anything in the panel to the right because of the earth that had fallen from above (Breccia [supra n. 12] 53).

³⁰ The front surfaces of the pilasters of the Tigrane Tomb are painted with capitals and architectural detailing. The sculpted pilasters of the Main Tomb at Kom el-Shoqafa are treated sculpturally as architectural units. The faces of the pilasters of the Sieglin Tomb (Schreiber [supra n. 6] vii, fig. 1) have painted decoration, as have the faces of the pilasters of most of the other tombs that carry painted decoration in the Kom el-Shoqafa catacombs; so do the faces of the pilasters of the tomb from Gabbari.

³¹ M.I. Rostovtzeff, *Antichnaia dekorativnaia zhivopis' na iugie rossii* (St. Petersburg 1913–1914).

there. If the birds and flowers truly were comparable to those from South Russian tombs, they must have been painted with greater fidelity and a far lighter touch than the floral decoration in the Tigrane Tomb, as we shall see.

The second tomb that is comparable to the Tigrane Tomb in both triclinium form and Egyptianizing decoration is the Main Tomb from the Great Catacombs at Kom el-Shoqafa, which should date to the Flavian period (A.D. 69–98), and probably to an early part of that period if the male and female portrait statues that flank the entrance to the burial chamber are contemporary with the chamber.³² These statues stand in traditional Egyptian poses,³³ garbed in traditional Egyptian dress, the man in a kilt, the woman in a diaphanous garment. Their portrait heads, however, compare well to Roman portrait types. The head of the man, who is beardless and has short curly hair, can be related to portraits from the period of Vespasian (A.D. 69–79),³⁴ particularly to a portrait of the emperor himself³⁵ that includes the anomalous feature of incised irises and pupils, providing the Egyptianizing figure from Kom el-Shoqafa with its piercing gaze.

The hair of the deceased woman is pulled to the sides forming neat waves, a common female hairstyle, found in many periods from Classical to Late An-

tique. The tiny round curls that frame her forehead make the hairstyle exceptional, however, and this specific coiffure finds its best comparisons in portraits of women who were associated with the emperor Claudius. Antonia Minor (died A.D. 37), the mother of Claudius, is shown with a similarly styled coiffure,³⁶ but the closest parallels occur on portraits of Claudius's wife, Agrippina Minor (A.D. 15–59),³⁷ and his daughter, Antonia Claudia (killed A.D. 65).³⁸ The hairstyle of the woman from the Kom el-Shoqafa tomb, therefore, is seemingly slightly more conservative and old-fashioned than that of the man.³⁹ Yet, the female portrait, in conjunction with that of the male, does argue for a relatively early Flavian date for the couple, even if we accept a slight stylistic lag beyond Rome.

The tomb is decorated in relief throughout. On the rear wall of the central niche a mummy laid out on a lion-bier is attended by Anubis and flanked by Thoth and Horus; on the lateral walls of the niche are priests and women. The rear walls of the left and right niches show the Apis bull dressed by Isis or Nephthys (the identity of the goddess is unclear on each); the lateral walls of these niches depict other deities, including Osiris, Ptah, and two of the Canopic gods. Inside the room, on the short walls that flank the entrance are sculpted two versions of

³² Schreiber (supra n. 6) pl. 23. A. Rowe, "Excavations of the Graeco-Roman Museum at Kôm el-Shukafa during the Season 1941–42," *BSAA* 11:2 (1942) 19 suggested that these statues may be of relatives of the deceased "to be identified with the weeping individuals (obviously relatives of the deceased woman, perhaps the son and daughter) depicted on the left and right walls respectively above the central sarcophagus." This suggestion was probably based on the observation expressed by F.W. von Bissing, *La catacombe nouvellement découverte de Kom el Chougafa* (Alexandria, n.d.) 3 that the statues in the niches appear to have been later additions because the niches in which they stand were initially openings in the wall that were later closed. Empereur (personal communication) doubts Rowe's interpretation, and I do not see that the statues must be dissociated from the Main Tomb on the basis of the transformation of an opening into a niche. From these statues, E. Breccia (*Alexandria ad Aegyptum: A Guide to the Ancient and Modern Town and to Its Graeco-Roman Museum* [Bergamo 1922] 326) dates the tomb between the Flavian and Hadrianic periods (see also von Bissing 3 for the same dating). Empereur (supra n. 6) 7 repeats this date (Domitian through Hadrian).

³³ With the exception that the woman stands with one leg extended rather than with her feet together.

³⁴ Similar are the general proportions of the face with its broad, high cap of hair and the treatment of the planes, muscles, and wrinkles of the face. E.g., Naples inv. 39165,

L. Martelli in A. Giuliano ed., *Museo Nazionale Romano. Le sculture* 1:9 (Rome 1987) 222, no. R 169.

³⁵ Naples inv. 80723, A.A. Amadio in Giuliano (supra n. 34) 187, no. R 143.

³⁶ Cf. the small female head in Naples, inv. 623, B. Di Leo in Giuliano (supra n. 36) 148, no. R 106, which is compared to the Antonia Minor "Stirnlöckchen" type.

³⁷ Cf., e.g., Copenhagen I.N. 753 and I.N. 751, V. Poulsen, *Les portraits romains* 1 (Copenhagen 1962) 97, nos. 62–63. Copenhagen I.N. 753, which is made of "pierre noire . . . un matériau égyptien," is particularly close to the example from the Kom el-Shoqafa Tomb. Another portrait with a similar hairstyle is one recently identified as another wife of Claudius, Messalina; see M. Fuchs, "Frauen um Caligula und Claudius: Milona Caesonia, Drusilla und Messalina," *AA* 1990, 107–22, figs. 10–13.

³⁸ See, e.g., Copenhagen I.N. 754, Poulsen (supra n. 37) 111, no. 74.

³⁹ Another female head (Schreiber [supra n. 6] pls. 47–48) found in the shaft of the rotunda of the Main Tomb finds perfect parallels in portraits of Julia Titi, the daughter of Titus and the mistress of her uncle, Domitian. Cf., e.g., Rome, Terme 8638, G. Daltrop et al., *Die Flavien* (Berlin 1966) pl. 42; Solothurn, private collection (Daltrop et al., pl. 44); Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Cabinet des Médailles 2089 (Daltrop et al., pl. 47a–b). Empereur (supra n. 6) 4 identifies it as a portrait of Domitian's wife, the empress Julia Longina.

Anubis. The exterior of these walls is decorated with agathodaimons and shields with central gorgoneia.⁴⁰

The last tomb with both triclinium form and Egyptianizing decoration is the so-called Sieglin Tomb. It was discovered at Gabbari in 1900 during Sieglin's first expedition and is only known from a drawing by Fiechter.⁴¹ The drawing shows a chamber in triclinium form with sarcophagi set within the arcosolia. The delicately drawn plants and animals decorating the exterior surfaces that frame the central niche have reminded many scholars of the treatment of decorative motifs within the Third Pompeian Style (ca. 10 B.C.–A.D. 45) and the tomb has normally been dated on this basis,⁴² although the style may well have lingered somewhat later in Alexandria.

The theatricality and illusionism implied in the construction of Roman triclinium tombs are also seen in Ptolemaic kline tombs, but the antecedents of the form are markedly different. The first impetus for the triclinium form was probably provided by the funerary banquet itself, a ritual that can be documented in Greece and the Near East as early as the Bronze Age and that was an integral part of Roman funerary rites. In addition to its triclinium-shaped burial chamber, the catacomb at Kom el-Shoqafa contained an actual, usable (and, presumably, used) triclinium fitted out with rock-cut klinai with a table set in its center.⁴³ This triclinium (and presumably others like it) was used for the funerary feast and must have also served for the memorial meals that would have taken place during the year at the celebrations that marked the commemoration of the dead.⁴⁴ A second impulse for the construction of the burial chamber in triclinium form may have derived from Totenmahl reliefs, which by placing the deceased at a hero's banquet heroized him and which provided one of the standard motifs for Roman gravestones in the Egyptian chora.⁴⁵ This tradition may have provided an ideological impetus to create the banquet of the dead in architectural form. A third stimulus may have been provided by

the dining clubs that flourished in Egypt as well as throughout the rest of the Roman world, and that often acted as burial societies.⁴⁶

DECORATIVE PROGRAM OF THE TIGRANE TOMB

The Tigrane Tomb separates itself from other triclinium tombs by its painted decoration. The sculpted decoration of the Main Grave at Kom el-Shoqafa may rival it for the extent of its program, but it scarcely competes with the Tigrane Tomb for the intricacy of its narrative, and the Tigrane Tomb preserves the most extensive painted decoration of any tomb yet recovered from ancient Alexandria (fig. 2). The back walls of the niches created by the lenoi carry narrative scenes. The lateral walls of the niches, the pilasters, and the jambs of the doorway bear iconic figures. The vaults above the niches are enlivened with floral decoration, and the domed ceiling centers on a gorgoneion set within a circle around which entwine vegetal motifs through which wild animals caper. The figures appear polychrome against the white plastered ground, but this effect is achieved with a very limited palette of black, red ocher, yellow ocher, green, and blue. The pigments are thinned with water rather than mixed with white to achieve different values. Most figures and objects are outlined with a wash or full-strength application of color—occasionally more heavily on one side of the form than the other—which imparts some sense of mass to the forms.

Entrance Corridor

Two male figures on the lateral walls of the entrance corridor guide the visitor into the tomb (fig. 3). Set in a panel above each is an Apis bull (fig. 4). Both men and bulls face the painted chamber. The men wear *nemes* headdresses painted in yellow ocher with black lines to indicate their layering and fronted with gold loops that might have been intended as *uraei*. The figures' short garments are decorated with a crosshatched pattern above and a scale pattern below, the coffers of the former articulated with yellow

⁴⁰ For a detailed description of the sculpted program, the identification of the individual figures, and a thought-provoking interpretation that is nevertheless difficult to accept, see Rowe (supra n. 32) 19–27.

⁴¹ Schreiber (supra n. 6) vii, fig. 1; reproduced in Pagenstecher (supra n. 17) 168, fig. 104.

⁴² See Adriani 1966, I, 180 for the scholarly opinions and bibliography.

⁴³ See Rowe (supra n. 32) 13–14 and pl. 1 for a reconstruction of a banquet in the "triclinium funèbre" in the catacomb of Kom el-Shoqafa.

⁴⁴ See Toynbee (supra n. 9) 50–51.

⁴⁵ See, e.g., Z. Hawwass, "Preliminary Report on the Excavations at Kôm Abou Bellou," *Studien zur altägyptischen Kultur* 7 (1979) figs. 2–3; S.A.A. El-Nassery and G. Wagner, "Nouvelles stèles de Kôm Abu Bellou," *BIFAO* 78 (1978) pls. 77–85, figs. 30–55.

⁴⁶ See J.G. Griffiths, "The Isiac Jug from Southwark," *JEA* 59 (1973) 233–36; A.F. Shore, "A Drinking Cup with Demotic Inscription," *BMQ* 36 (1971–1972) 16–19; also W. Burkert, *Ancient Mystery Cults* (Cambridge, Mass. 1987) 44; and F. de Cenival, *Les associations religieuses en Égypte d'après les documents démotiques* (Cairo 1972) passim.

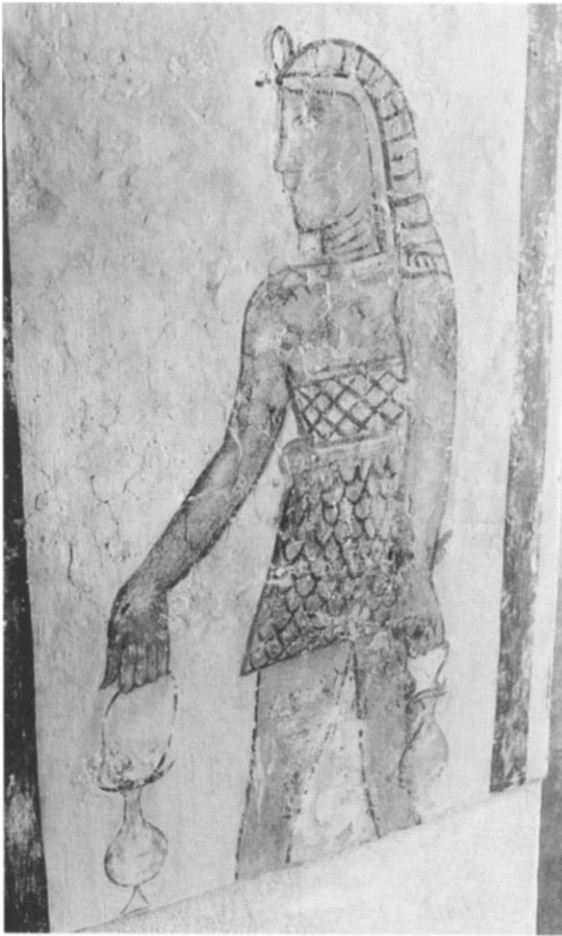


Fig. 3. Male figure from right wall of entrance corridor. (Photo author)

ocher lines within the margins. The garments are bound about their pectorals and tied with a green sash around their waists. The exposed skin of their faces, chests, arms, and legs is painted with a solid, flat red ocher, outlined in yellow ocher on the left side of the figure. Small lines at their chins may be intended as false beards. In each hand, they carry round vessels, footed and with bale handles, which are painted in a thinned black, appearing as gray and perhaps intended as silver.

Short Walls of the Burial Chamber

The short walls that flank the entrance to the chamber are decorated with snakes that face the opening, protecting it. The snake seen to the right, when one is facing the door (fig. 5), is bearded and crowned with the pschent (composite) crown. It rears

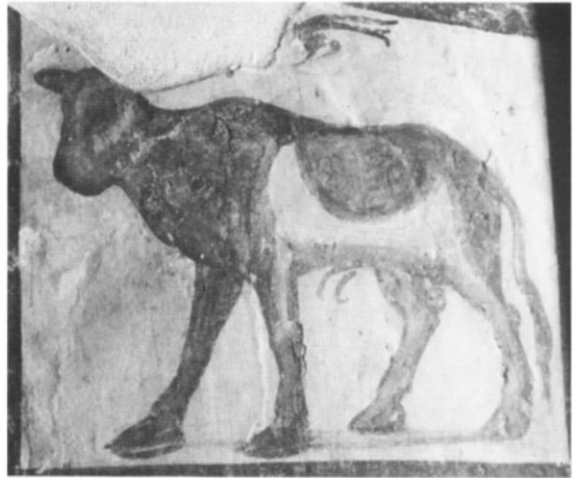


Fig. 4. Apis bull from right wall of entrance corridor. (Photo author)

up and stretches its head down and forward, its mouth open, tongue flicking. The scales of its back are painted with thinned green, outlined in black; the crown, underside of the snake, and upper part of its beard are in yellow ocher. More green is used on the lower part of the beard.

The left snake (fig. 6) is more decorous, rearing straight up in three-quarter view, its head only in profile; it too flicks its tongue. It wears a crown that looks like a tricorn hat, but which was most likely meant to be the sun disc and horns. The crown is painted in yellow ocher; the remainder of the snake is in thinned green with the details of the underbelly and the contour of the back indicated in black.

Central Niche

The painting on the lunette wall facing the visitor entering the room shows a mummy, with its head to left, supine on a bier attended by two female figures, one of whom stands at the head of the bier, the other at its foot. Behind each woman is a pedestal on which a falcon perches. Above the mummy, a winged disc holds out a garland, perhaps grasped in its talons by ribbons that flutter against the white ground (figs. 7–8). Although lacking a cartonnage or mummy portrait,⁴⁷ the mummy is otherwise encased as is normal in the Roman period: intersecting diagonal lines, with empty squares within the rectangles, indicate typical rhombic wrapping here shaded with a green wash. The contour of the mummy itself is drawn with a green wash, heaviest on the bottom,

⁴⁷ Mummies with cartonnages were found at Kom el-Shoqafa (see Rowe [supra n. 32] 29). None, however, is mentioned in L. Corcoran, *Portrait Mummies from Roman Egypt*

(I–IV Centuries A.D.) with a Catalog of Portrait Mummies in Egyptian Museums (SAOC 56, Chicago 1995).



Fig. 5. Agathodaimon from right wall flanking door. (Photo author)

imparting a sense of three-dimensionality to the figure.

The mummy lies with its head supported by a Roman headrest with a bird's-head fulcrum⁴⁸ on a couch of late Greek and Roman type with turned-knob legs, similar to those of bronze furniture found at the Vesuvian sites and elsewhere.⁴⁹ The top of the



Fig. 6. Agathodaimon from left wall flanking door. (Photo author)

bier is shown in orthogonal perspective, whereas the legs are placed—more or less—in one-point perspective. Shadows below the feet of the bier indicate an indeterminate light source. The bier is hung with a patterned cloth painted red, yellow, and green that is attached at either end of the long side and caught up again in the middle in a knot from which an ad-

⁴⁸ See S. Faust, *Fulcra: Figürlicher und ornamentaler Schmuck an antiken Betten* (Mainz 1989) 31, who notes that the Tigrane Tomb has an illustration of a bird's-head fulcrum. Two actual fulcra are said to have been found in Egypt: one is in the Cairo Museum (once Collection Fouquet, from Lower Egypt, Faust 174, no. 135; see also B. Barr-Sharrar, *The Hellenistic and Early Imperial Decorative Bust* [Mainz 1987] 34, no. C 5, pl. 2); and the other in Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale inv. 475, once Collection Oppremann from Alexandria (Faust 194, no. 273; Barr-Sharrar 53, no. C 81, pl. 26).

⁴⁹ See, e.g., G.M.A. Richter, *Furniture of the Greeks, Etruscans, and Romans* (London 1966) figs. 530 (Berlin Br 8903, bronze couch from Boscoreale); 532 (Naples inv. 78614, bronze couch from Pompeii); 542 (Morocco, Rabat Museum, bronze leg of a couch); 304 (Naples inv. 18394, a kline depicted on an Apulian bell krater); 308 (Berlin Br 10053, bronze couch from Priene [Greek]). On the couch shown in the tomb painting, however, the inverted-bell form is shown as the highest element on the leg, rather than on the lower half of the leg as in all extant actual examples cited above.



Fig. 7. Central niche with scene at mummy. (Photo author)

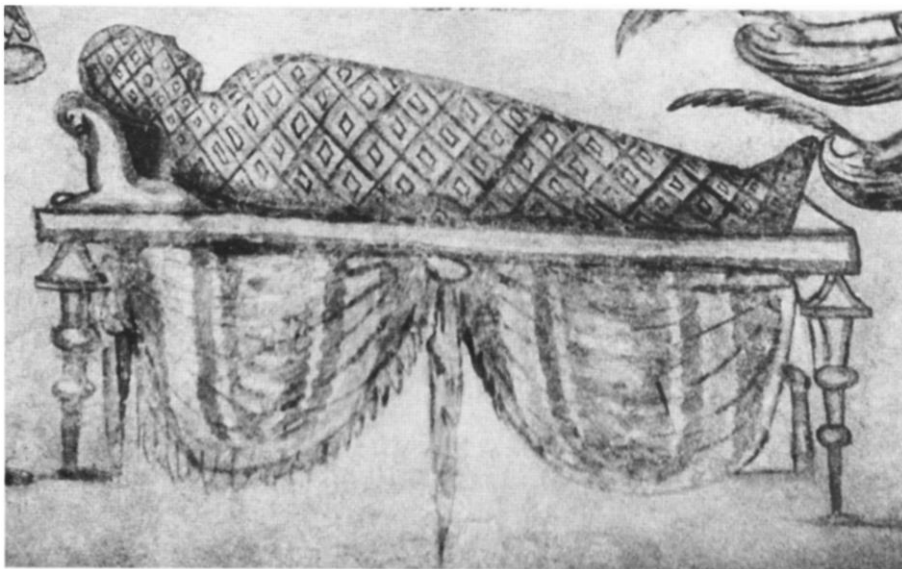


Fig. 8. Detail of central niche. (Photo author)

ditional swag falls. The artistic intention behind the draped cloth is a naturalistic one: the swag is articulated with black lines to indicate the draping of the cloth, and the vertical patterns of the cloth have irregular edges, probably also meant to indicate folds. This cloth shows the most Classical treatment of all the fabrics in the paintings from the tomb.

The females that flank the bier are identified by Adriani as Isis and Nephthys,⁵⁰ and although neither deity shows clearly identifying characteristics, he is almost certainly correct. The figure at the foot of the bier stands in the traditional Egyptian pose with a frontal torso, the remainder of her body seen in profile. Only her feet, which do not adhere to a single groundline, are unfaithful to the Egyptian formula. She is garbed in a scale-patterned dress that terminates at her calf with fringes and that has tight elbow-length sleeves. The color of the lower half of the garment is differentiated along a diagonal line. The back part of the dress is painted green, the front part in yellow ocher, which may have been intended to indicate a wrapped garment. We see the same color division, though reversed and treated in a much bolder manner, on the right figure in the right-niche. The top part of the garment of the figure at the head of the bier in the central niche is divided horizontally, red ocher on top, yellow ocher on the bottom. On her head, she wears a green headdress fronted with a uraeus, rather than the hieroglyph denoting the Mistress of the Shrine, characteristic of Nephthys, or one of the many crowns that characterize Isis. In her hands, clasped before her waist, she holds two green objects that were certainly intended as palm fronds.

The female figure at the foot of the bier is winged, but since male figures in the tomb paintings wear similar wings, these do not serve to individualize her. She stands in stiff three-quarter view with legs together and stretches out her wings and arms toward the mummy, extending a green palm branch in either hand. In contrast to her body, her head is in profile. She wears the same garment as the other female figure (except that the bodice of hers is painted entirely in yellow ocher), but her wig is fronted by a floral arrangement (a lotus?) rather than by a uraeus.⁵¹ Both goddesses have small black strokes at their chins that might represent false beards.

Above the bier hovers the sun disc displaying

the garland. The disc itself is comprised of yellow ocher and white concentric circles from which red-ocher uraei peer out to either side. The wing and cover feathers of the sun disc are treated similarly with thin black lines to differentiate the feathering. The wing feathers, however, are outlined in red ocher, and the cover feathers in green. Two claws, seemingly unattached to the wings, hold out the garland, which is painted in deep red ocher with small curved strokes that simulate an abundance of vegetal forms.

The scene is framed laterally by two falcons standing on pedestals painted with yellow ocher to appear as alabaster. The falcons face inward toward the other figures in the scene and are mirror images of one another except that the one on the left wears the crown of Lower Egypt, and the one on the right wears the pschent crown. As has been previously noted, the lateral walls of the niche are cut out for loculi, so they lack figural decoration.

The upper panels of the pilasters that flank the central niche (the lower parts of the pilasters are destroyed) are each decorated with a seated figure of Anubis seen in human form with a jackal's head (figs. 9–10). Both sit on block seats painted with yellow ocher to simulate alabaster and hold staffs in their right hands. The Anubis figure on the left pilaster is almost completely destroyed (fig. 9), yet despite his fragmentary state, it is clear from the way that he holds his staff partway down the shaft, as well as from the snake-headed shape of the staff's handle, that he was not the mirror image of the other. The Anubis of the right pilaster (fig. 10)—which is well preserved except for lower legs and left arm—has his face painted in red ocher, and the rest of his unclothed body heavily outlined in yellow ocher. The difference in color indicates that he is to be seen as a priest wearing an Anubis mask. He wears a high-waisted scaly garment, the color of which varies from predominantly yellow on the chest to green on the lower part. He extends his left arm to hold up a stemmed cup.

Left Niche

The painting on the lunate wall of the left niche (figs. 11–12) shows a male grasping two palm fronds and standing frontally. He is flanked by seated jackals, winged figures in tunics and leggings, and egg-shaped balls tied with fillets set on high stands. Above

⁵⁰ Adriani 1956, 71 and *passim*.

⁵¹ On this basis, we might be tempted to identify her tentatively as Isis, by comparison with the bust of Isis in the Vatican, Museo Gregoriano Egizio 73 from Tivoli (A. Roullet, *The Egyptian and Egyptianizing Monuments of Imperial Rome* [Leiden 1972] pl. 106.144; 93, no. 125), who has

a lotus on the front of her headdress, but the bust is too idiosyncratic to be reliable. The lotus on the bust of Isis from the double herm in the Vatican, Museo Gregoriano Egizio 78 from Tivoli (Roullet, pl. 107.146; 93, no. 126), is modern.



Fig. 9. Anubis from the lateral face of the left pilaster of the central niche. (Photo author)

the scene is a winged disc, similar, but not identical, to that in the central niche. Like the goddesses in the axial niche, all figures here have their exposed skin heavily outlined in yellow ocher.

The central male figure clasps his hands in front of his torso, holding the green palms between them. In his hair, he wears two yellow-ocher ornaments to left and right. A scale pattern—perhaps intended as muscular definition, for it is painted in the same yellow ocher as the exposed skin of his arms, legs, face, and neck—covers his torso, although the proper right side of his kilt (which is decorated with a double crosshatched pattern) appears to have been tied high up on his chest, reaching to his pectorals. His head is turned slightly away from a strictly frontal position, and he gazes toward the figure at the right. The two jackals that sit at the frontal figure's feet are delicately painted and look up at him alertly.

The two winged figures that flank the frontal male and jackals stretch out their arms—and their attached green wings—toward the central figure. The flanking figures are subtly differentiated from one another. The figure on the left is slightly taller than that on the right, is bare-chested, and has wings treated in a cursory manner—almost as swaths of fabric—like those of the right-hand goddess in the axial lunette. In contrast, the chest of the figure on the right is covered with a green scale pattern, and his right wing has clearly articulated feathers. Each flanking figure stands with his weight on his back



Fig. 10. Anubis from the lateral face of the right pilaster of the central niche. (Photo author)

leg, and his other leg extended, but the left figure stands in the traditional straight-legged stance associated with Egypt, whereas the figure on the right holds his back knee slightly flexed. Nevertheless, with their heads in profile, their poses recall those of ancient Egypt, although both their torsos are seen in more or less three-quarter view.

The treatment of the winged disc that hovers over the scene is strikingly different from that in the mummy scene. Its central circle is treated as a spiral, formed by the body of the right-hand uraeus, rather than as concentric circles. What can be taken for cover feathers on the disc in the central niche is here considered a separate, smaller wing, the feathers of which are left unpainted. The contour of the larger wing is banded with a thick, heavy swath of green.

Horus in his guise as a falcon, facing out toward the viewer, decorates each of the lateral walls of the niche, although the image to the right has almost entirely disappeared. The falcon on the left is also poorly preserved, but what remains is painted in a light, almost feathery style, the bird's breast subtly shaded with fine lines of yellow and red ocher, green,



Fig. 11. Left niche with scene of frontal male figure. (Photo author)



Fig. 12. Detail of central frontal male of left niche. (Photo author)

and black (fig. 13). It wears the crown of Upper Egypt. The lateral face of the left pilaster shows the remains of two snakes, the bottom part of a large cobra above, and a smaller cobra below (fig. 14). The uppermost snake is painted in the most delicate style of any image in the tomb. Fine black lines indicate the contours of the form and fine strokes of thinned brown and green color the skin of the reptile. The snake below is painted in a slightly stronger manner with heavier black lines for the contour and a heavier brown stroke outlining the form. Its treatment is similar to the treatment of the human figures on the walls of the tomb, although still somewhat more delicate. In fact, with the exception of the Apis bull at the entranceway, all the animal figures are painted with finer brush strokes and more varied coloration than are the human figures or humanized deities. Based on the handling of the other pilasters in the tomb, the lateral face of the right-hand pilaster is likely to have had a similar arrangement of snakes, but this pilaster has been entirely destroyed.

Right Niche

The painting on the back wall of the right niche shows a male garbed in tunic and leggings (with a crosshatched pattern similar to but simpler than that of the garment of the frontal figure) and wearing a helmet that takes the form of a nemes headcloth (fig. 15). He is shown in right profile kneeling on



Fig. 13. Horus falcon from left wall of left niche. (Photo author)

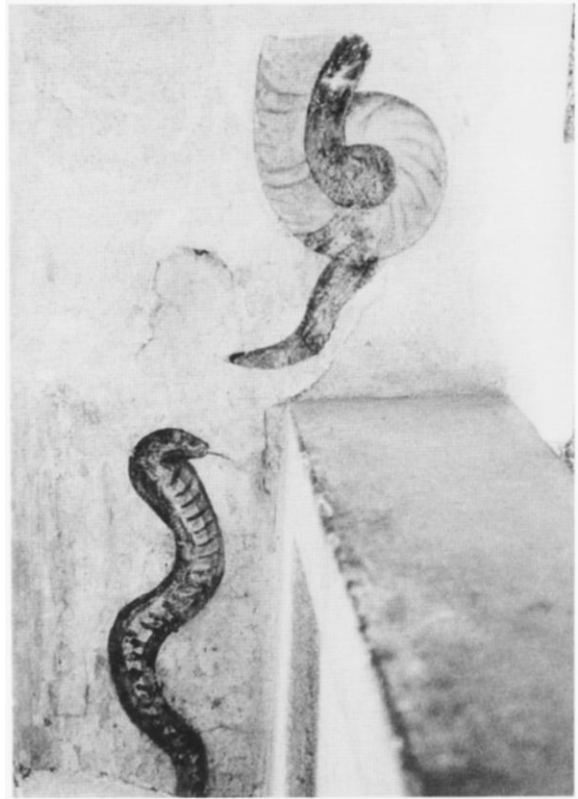


Fig. 14. Snakes from lateral face of left pilaster of left niche. (Photo author)



Fig. 15. Right niche with scene of male kneeling before goddess. (Photo author)

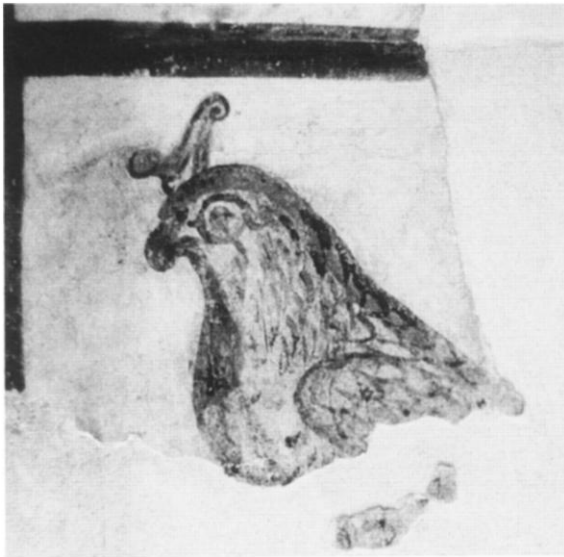


Fig. 16. Horus falcon from left wall of right niche. (Photo author)

his left (?) knee and, with each hand, holding out green palm fronds to a standing female. She is in left profile and wears a diadem fronted by a uraeus and a garment that hangs to about mid-calf and is tied across the upper chest with cross-bands. The lower part of her garment resembles, conceptually, those of the goddesses in the first scene: fringed at the bottom and decorated with a scale pattern, it too is differentiated in the lower part; here, however, the differentiation is not indicated by a change of color, but by a change of pattern, which makes it appear that a second piece of cloth is pulled around her buttocks. In her outstretched hands she holds out golden stalks to the kneeling male. To the left of the kneeling central figure, a male stands in profile to right, his left foot advanced, his right one perpendicular in the traditional pose of an Egyptian standing sculpted figure. Much of the upper part of this figure is destroyed, but it is clear that he wears a short garment baring his legs below mid-thigh and holds out a large green censer in his extended left hand and a shaft terminating in an S-shaped snake-headed crook in his lowered right hand. Like the preceding scene, this one is flanked by egg-shaped objects tied with fillets set on pedestals and finished off above with a winged sun disc, the center of which is similar to the disc in the central niche, the wings of which compare better with those in the left niche.

Horus falcons decorate the lateral walls of the niche (figs. 16–17). Both face the center of the room, but they are treated quite differently from one another. The falcon on the left (fig. 16) is painted primarily in black and brown, its beak and eye produced by heavy calligraphic black strokes, its eye round with



Fig. 17. Horus falcon from right wall of right niche. (Photo author)

a marked tear duct and falcon line, and its neck feathers delicately drawn. It wears a crown that can be taken for that of Lower Egypt. The falcon on the right lateral wall (fig. 17) adds green for the shading of its chest. Its eye is oval with a long black line at its outer edge and the falcon marking is also long, but unconnected to the eye. Its neck feathers are boldly painted in black, and the contour of its chest is articulated with black hooks. Its crown is probably also meant to be that of Lower Egypt, but appears plump and inflated.

The sides of the pilasters of the niche on the right are decorated with recumbent sphinxes above and snakes below (figs. 18–19). The sphinxes face the center of the chamber and wear nemes headdresses surmounted by uraei and are painted with yellow ochre, with interior details and contours drawn in black. Their squared jaws and faces generally squared in profile most resemble the faces of the goddesses in the central niche. The rampant cobra preserved below the right sphinx is drawn in a frontal pose, the underside of its belly facing the viewer, with its head, striking to left, drawn in three-quarter view.



Fig. 18. Left pilaster of right niche. (Photo author)



Fig. 19. Sphinx from lateral face of right pilaster of right niche. (Photo author)

It is indicated entirely with strokes of brown and is one of the most convincing figures in the tomb.

Vaults of the Niches

The vaults of the niches are painted with floral designs that vary from large, well-defined, multi-petaled red flowers to small red splotches amid green leaves (fig. 20). Compared to the floral decoration in Rostovtzeff's South Russian tombs, to which Brecchia favorably compared the painting of the tomb from Ramleh,⁵² the florals in the Tigrane Tomb are, on the one hand, ponderously stylized and, on the other, cursory. On this basis, the painting in the tomb from Ramleh must have been superior to that of the Tigrane Tomb. Yet, despite its deficiencies, the floral decoration in the Tigrane Tomb might well bespeak

⁵² See supra pp. 706-707.

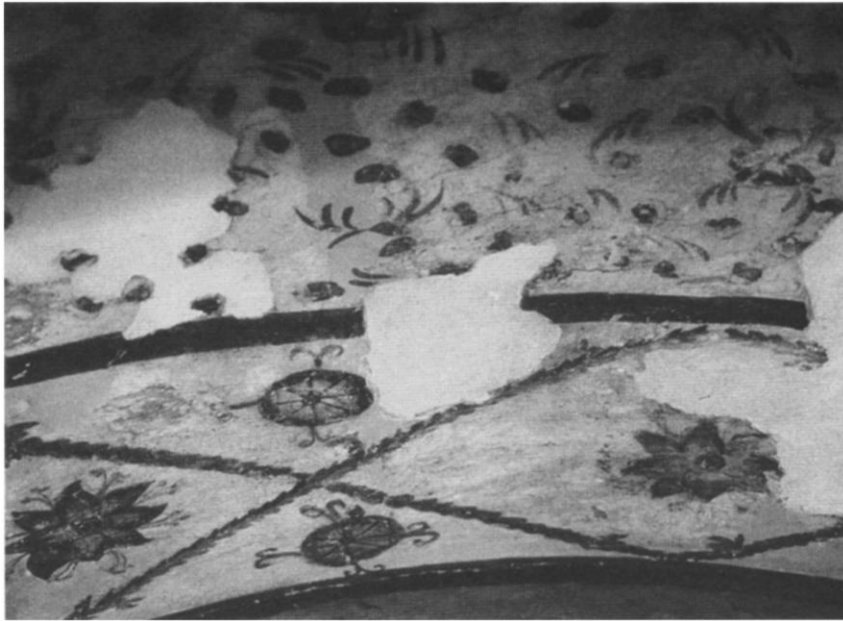


Fig. 20. Floral vault decoration. (Photo author)

the Rosalia, the Feast of the Roses, which although not exclusively connected with the dead, afforded a specific occasion for scattering roses on tombs. These “counterfeited flowers [painted in tombs] perpetuated, as it were, all the year round the offerings of actual roses” at the gravesite,⁵³ and—if perhaps only with the eyes of faith—one can imagine the flowers in the Tigrane Tomb simulating roses.

Central Dome

The ceiling of the tomb, which is cut into a shallow dome, is painted with a central gorgoneion, which faces the visitor entering the room and is surrounded by leafy ornament enlivened with leaping animals (fig. 21). The dome, because of its fine style of Classicizing treatment, claims much of Adriani’s attention in his publication of the monument.⁵⁴ The four corners of the chamber, too, articulated with trompe l’oeil painted piers are in a tradition that begins in Hellenistic Greece and is later perfected by the Romans.

The decoration of the dome is almost monochromatic, painted with swift calligraphic black lines, enlivened with only occasional washes of yellow ocher and green. The frontal, beautiful Medusa head is

set in a golden circle, visually supported by four narrow stalks or thyrsoi (shaded with a wash of yellow ocher) with heraldic eagles set halfway down on each. Green garlands loop between the tops of the stalks, providing a scalloped accent around the band that encircles the gorgoneion, and are bound to the stalks with ribbons that flutter in the breeze. Between the stalks swirl calligraphic leafy forms touched with green, and in each compartment created by the stalks is a leaping animal, caprids alternating with spotted felines.

The decoration of the dome is architecturally conceived. The central gorgoneion peers through the oculus of the dome, which is indicated by a narrow circular band, and the four stalks (or thyrsoi), which are drawn to each corner of the chamber, act as ribs. Adriani adduces a number of first- and second-century Roman parallels for the decoration of the vault,⁵⁵ but the most convincing indication for the date of the tomb is the architectural conceit of the dome’s painted decoration. The painted structure of the Tigrane dome is most comparable to a scheme introduced in Rome in the Hadrianic period that, under the influence of the emperor’s delight in groined vaults, emphasizes the diagonals of the ceiling.⁵⁶

⁵³ Toynbee (supra n. 9) 63.

⁵⁴ Adriani 1956, 74–77, pls. 4–5, figs. 9–17.

⁵⁵ Adriani 1956, 84–86.

⁵⁶ Ling (supra n. 2) 179, discussing ceiling and vault decoration, defines the most important trend to emerge in the mid-Imperial period as the scheme in which the diagonals of the ceiling were emphasized. On the axial com-

position, see also A. Barbet, *La peinture murale romaine: Les styles décoratifs pompéiens* (Paris 1985) 264–65, who credits the style to the middle of the second century, beginning in the 130s. Her examples, however, emphasize the orthogonals as well as the diagonals, and present an effect that argues less for an architectural model.



Fig. 21. Dome decoration. (Photo author)

The scheme of the Tigrane ceiling is similar to that of the painted vault decoration of Vatican Cemetery tomb B, dated to the Hadrianic period,⁵⁷ and to the ceiling decoration of the house under the Baths of Caracalla, dated 130–140.⁵⁸ The architectonic quality of the Tigrane vault—stronger than in the two preceding examples—argues for a date close to the Hadrianic period, when Hadrian made the exploitation of the dome of primary interest.⁵⁹

STYLE OF THE PAINTINGS

In a seminal article,⁶⁰ L. Castiglione notes the double style, as he terms it, of many funerary mon-

uments in Egypt of the Roman period, as it occurs, for example, in the Tomb of Petosiris from the Dachla Oasis (fig. 22).⁶¹ He points out that in monuments that exhibit the dual style, it is invariably the image of the deceased that takes the Classicizing form and the deities that surround the deceased that retain their Egyptian style, and he concludes that the dual style is used to denote two realms: the one real, the other spiritual, a stylistic differentiation marking a physical separation between gods and men that begins in the Hellenistic period in other forms.⁶² Yet, whereas the Tigrane Tomb combines the two styles observed by Castiglione, it does not adhere to the division he outlined. In the Tigrane Tomb, all the figures on the walls are treated in the same quasi-Egyptianizing style; those on the ceiling are treated in a Classical fashion.

Despite the duality of the stylistic sources, I should like to propose that a single painter is responsible for painting almost all the images in the Tigrane Tomb. Although the brushwork, scale, use and treatment of space, and the details of the figures differ from one image to the next, in each case stylistic features can be found that are handled similarly and that connect the images with one another. The only figures that I would hesitatingly assign to a different hand are the two males in the entranceway to the burial chamber.

Of the narrative scenes, that in the central niche with the mummy seems most competent, and its brushwork and illusionistic aspirations connect it most easily to the calligraphic treatment and corporeality of the gorgoneion and animals of the ceiling. The slightly perspectival treatment of the kline compares well to the slight foreshortening of the leaping animals of the ceiling: neither is fully realized, but both exhibit a similar intention toward three-dimensional form. Illusionistic, too, is the fabric that drapes the bier, detailed with lines that indicate the bunching and weight of the fabric. Of all the narratives painted in the niches, the mummy scene is

⁵⁷ Ling (supra n. 2) 179, fig. 194.

⁵⁸ Ling (supra n. 2) 180, fig. 195.

⁵⁹ Hadrian traveled to Egypt and Alexandria ca. 130 and may have been responsible for one of the Roman phases of reconstruction of the Serapeum; see A. Rowe, *Discovery of the Famous Temple and Enclosure of Serapis of Alexandria* (ASAE Suppl. 2, Cairo 1946) 62; J. Beaujeu, *La religion romaine à l'apogée de l'empire* (Paris 1955) 230 and an Alexandrian bronze drachma from year 17 of Hadrian's reign (= 132/3), which shows the emperor in the Serapeum (London, *BMC, Alexandria* 876; W. Hornbostel, *Serapis* [Leiden 1972] fig. 83). If this is indeed the case, Hadrianic architectural forms would have been visible in Alexandria itself.

⁶⁰ L. Castiglione, "Dualité du style dans l'art sépulcral égyptien à l'époque romaine," *Acta antiqua* 9 (1961) 209–30.

⁶¹ A monument not cited by Castiglione (supra n. 60). See J. Osing, "Die Gräber des Petubastis und Petosiris," in Osing et al., *Denkmäler der Oase Dachla* (Mainz 1982) 71–95, esp. pl. 32a; and O. Neugebauer, "The Zodiac Ceiling of Petosiris and Petubastis," in Osing et al., 96–101.

⁶² On the stylistic and physical separation between gods and their worshippers in the Hellenistic period, see F. van Straten, "Images of Gods and Men in a Changing Society: Self-Identity in Hellenistic Religion," in A. Bulloch et al. eds., *Images and Ideologies: Self-Definition in the Hellenistic World* (Berkeley 1993) 248–64. For another form—and interpretation—of this dual style, see R.V. McCleary, "Ancestor Cults at Thernouthis in Lower Egypt," in J.H. Johnson ed., *Life in a Multi-cultural Society: Egypt from Cambyses to Constantine and Beyond* (Chicago 1992) 221–31, esp. 226–31.



Fig. 22. Tomb of Petosiris: Portrait of the deceased and Egyptian deities. (After J. Osing et al., *Denkmäler der Oase Dachla* [Mainz 1982] pl. 32a)

also the most subtle in its interweaving of color, although probably the most delicate painting is found in the coiled snake on the left pilaster of the niche with the frontal figure.

The style most *dissimilar* to that of the ceiling and the mummy scene is found in the scene that shows the figure kneeling before the deity. This scene immediately appears bolder and coarser. Moreover, the composition is directional rather than hieratic, and the figures seem to occupy less space against the white ground. Yet, individual details link this scene to the preceding one: the fringe of the female deity's garment recalls that on the garments of the goddesses flanking the bier and the edges of the swag on the kline; lines indicate a shadow on the side of the censer

held by the standing male, similar to the treatment of the swag on the kline. The treatment of the wings of the sun disc, however, connects the scene with the kneeling figure in the left niche. Finally, in all the lunate scenes, the exposed flesh of the figures is treated with wide bands of color to denote the contour.

Other correspondences and dissonances also stylistically interact between the scenes. The female in the scene with the kneeling figure—the scene that is seemingly most dissimilar—is the only human figure to show clearly preliminary sketch lines, which are laid out in green, but these preparatory lines also appear on the head of the Anubis on the right pilaster of the mummy scene and on the cup he raises in his right hand. Red ocher is used in both the scene with the kneeling figure and in the mummy scene, but is totally absent (with the exception of the bands that frame the picture) from the scene with the frontal figure.

The single section of the tomb that I can imagine might have been painted by a different hand are the panels that flank the entranceway. The Apis bull is certainly treated less delicately than any other animal figure in the tomb (his relatively small size might, however, account for this difference), but more important, the male figures stand out from all the rest. First, they are the only figures whose flesh is filled in with a solid color; second, they are the only figures that have a long, full chin, which produces a vertical rather than square countenance when viewed in profile; and third, the vessels that they carry are drawn with a delicacy and—I later argue—an accuracy unmatched by other objects found among the paintings.

If it is indeed the case that a single painter—or, at most, two closely allied painters within the workshop—is responsible for all the paintings in the tomb, the discrepancy in style and the differences in subject matter between the Classicizing central vault and the quasi-Egyptianizing paintings of the walls stem from a source other than a multiplicity of hands. I suggest that the reason for these variances lies in suiting style to subject matter.

At least as early as the first century B.C.,⁶³ painters in Alexandria were decorating tombs with Egyptian deities, but these figures were all drawn in tra-

⁶³ E.g., Anfushy, hypogeum 2 (Adriani 1966, I, 192–94, no. 142) with its three Egyptianizing scenes, including the deceased presented to Osiris, its plastic sphinxes, and Egyptian crowns, dated by Pagenstecher to ca. 240 (quoted by Adriani 1966, I, 192, no. 141), by Adriani to the second half

of the second century; see also the plastic sphinxes in Moustapha Pasha (Kamel) I (Adriani [supra n. 4] pl. 28), the tomb dated by Adriani to the second half of the third century (Adriani 1966, 133), although the sphinxes may be later additions.

ditional Egyptian style. The figures described by Breccia in the tomb from Ramleh appear to have been so executed,⁶⁴ and those in the Sieglin Tomb,⁶⁵ the niches of the Kom el-Shoqafa complex,⁶⁶ and another tomb of the Roman period from the western necropolis at Gabbari are similarly treated.⁶⁷ The narrative figures in the Tigrane Tomb are very different: neither the style nor the iconography is fully realized as Egyptian.

In the interplay of Egyptianizing and Classical styles, the Tigrane Tomb finds a good conceptual parallel in the Main Tomb from the Kom el-Shoqafa catacombs.⁶⁸ There, all the sculpted forms employ traditional Egyptian iconographical forms, but these are softened by the slight corporeality and illusionism created by the medium-high relief, which imparts a somewhat Classicizing style. Of the Egyptian deities and figures in the Main Tomb, most un-Egyptian in style is the often-figured Anubis, dressed as a Roman centurion and standing in a chiastic pose (fig. 23), which calls to mind the Roman treatment of the kline in the mummy scene of the Tigrane Tomb. As in the Tigrane Tomb, too, the Classical motifs in the Main Grave—the garland sarcophagi of the triclinium chamber and the shields with their gorgoneion emblems on the outside walls of the chamber—are purely Classical in form and execution.

Yet a major difference between the Egyptianizing treatment in the Tigrane Tomb and that of the Main Tomb at Kom el-Shoqafa is immediately evident: the style of the Egyptian figures in the Main Tomb may belie their Roman-period origin, but the iconographic elements are intelligibly and accurately rendered. In this respect, the Main Tomb fits comfortably with all the painted tombs from Roman Alexandria that utilize Egyptian subject matter. The Tigrane Tomb does not.

Few of the Egyptian details of the Tigrane Tomb bear close scrutiny. The garment of none of the figures is recognizably Egyptian. The headdresses of the female figures are generalized, at best, and the crowns worn by the Horus falcons on the lateral walls of the right-hand niche and the snakes on the entrance wall are entirely misrepresented.

An unpublished tomb niche from Gabbari excavated in 1990 provides the closest visual parallel for the paintings of the Tigrane Tomb.⁶⁹ On the back



Fig. 23. Kom el-Shoqafa: Anubis from Main Tomb. (After F.W. von Bissing and E. Gilliéron, *Les bas-reliefs de Kom el Chougafa* [Alexandria 1901] pl. 12)

wall of the tomb from Gabbari is an image of Isis-Aphrodite treated in purely Classicizing style; on the pilasters, figures of Eros-Harpocrates are treated in the same way. The images of pure Egyptian lineage, however, are conceived in a manner that could loosely be termed Egyptianizing. As in the Tigrane Tomb, the

⁶⁴ See supra n. 12.

⁶⁵ See supra n. 26.

⁶⁶ The Nebengrab, which had relatively well preserved decoration, is figured in Schreiber (supra n. 6) pls. 61–62.

⁶⁷ B. Habachi, "Two Tombs of the Roman Epoch Re-

cently Discovered at Gabbari: Tomb 'A,'" *BSAA* 9 (1936–1937) 270–82, figs. 1–5.

⁶⁸ Schreiber (supra n. 6) pls. 20–35.

⁶⁹ See M.S. Venit, "A New Painted Tomb from Roman Alexandria," *AJA* 100 (1996) 393 (abstract).

figures in the tomb from Gabbari that are the most successful are the Classicizing ones: some of the Egyptian figures—particularly those intended as Horus falcons—are almost entirely unrecognizable.

I propose that the painter (or painters) of the Tigrane Tomb and the painter of the tomb from Gabbari were trained in Classicizing workshops and that the stylistic and iconographic incongruities in their treatment of traditional Egyptian symbols lie in their unfamiliarity with Egyptian forms. Alexandrian Roman-period tombs seem to demand traditional Egyptian deities incorporated into their figurative program, and it is apparently necessary to assume an “Egyptianizing” style for these images in order to optimize their potency. In neither the Tigrane nor the Gabbari tomb is the deceased present in the manner of the examples that Castiglione adduces; thus, in neither is the division between Classical and Egyptian style played out in the way that he discusses. Yet, the Egyptian deities still retain (at least within the limitations of the artists) their traditional style. In the Tigrane Tomb and the tomb from Gabbari, the stylistic choice is dictated by its suitability to the subject, the efficacy of the images seemingly stylistically, as well as iconographically, based.

INTERPRETATION OF THE NARRATIVE PROGRAM

Interpretation of the scenes in the Tigrane Tomb is exacerbated by the very quality that intrigues, that is, their uniqueness. Although two of the narrative scenes show major elements found in funerary images elsewhere, none of the narratives finds close parallels in either extant Graeco-Roman or Egyptian mortuary iconography. In addition, the idiosyncratic nature of the Egyptian-based figures discussed above further restricts interpretation.

Adriani believed that the narrative program showed the death, resurrection, and apotheosis of Osiris,⁷⁰ but this interpretation is difficult to substantiate. First, in no way is the central male in any of the scenes marked out as Osiris: in none does he

wear the crown of the deity, nor in any does he assume the Osirid pose. Second, whereas the assimilation of the deceased pharaoh to the resurrected Osiris can be documented as early as the Pyramid Texts of the Fifth Dynasty, and whereas by the time of the Coffin Texts, Middle Kingdom private individuals were able to claim the privilege, in Alexandria—as throughout the Hellenistic and Roman world—the worship of Osiris more readily took the form of his syncretism with Dionysos,⁷¹ or with the Apis bull that produced the deity Serapis.⁷² Osiris frequently appears in iconic form on funerary monuments in Roman Egypt,⁷³ but in all Hellenized centers his cultic role had been entirely eclipsed by his wife and sister Isis,⁷⁴ and I believe that the narrative quality and the idiosyncratic subjects of the scenes argue for cult over icon. One might contend that the fact that the paintings in the Tigrane Tomb engage in a narrative exposition at all serves to support Adriani’s interpretation—the date of ca. A.D. 120 for Plutarch’s narrative *De Iside et Osiride*⁷⁵ places its creation in close relation to the construction of the tomb. Plutarch, however, is seemingly archaizing in privileging Osiris in his narrative,⁷⁶ and the lack of any specifically Osiran attributes in the paintings still eloquently argues against any identification of the central male with the deity.

Since no true parallels for the paintings in the tomb are known, I shall construct a case for the meaning of the painted program based on individual elements of the painted decoration and their location within the social and religious fabric of Roman Egypt. The component of the narrative most easily paralleled is that of the central niche. The mummy lying on its bier flanked by Isis and Nephthys, their arms outstretched, is a common motif in the funerary iconography of Graeco-Roman Egypt. Certainly the example that first comes to mind is the scene sculpted in the central niche of the Main Tomb at Kom el-Shoqafa, and it is to this image that Adriani relates that of the Tigrane niche.⁷⁷ But other examples of the period abound: at least two other tombs in the

⁷⁰ Adriani 1956, 70 and passim. Adriani’s strongly Christian interpretation does have some basis. Plutarch (361E; 362F) says that Osiris and Isis changed from good daemons into gods.

⁷¹ The notion of a chthonic Dionysos was firmly established by the fourth century B.C., and in the Ptolemaic political climate that focused on the veneration of Dionysos, the syncretism with Osiris was easily achieved. Adriani 1956, 83 interprets the egg-shaped objects in the two lateral lunate scenes as Dionysiac tympana and argues for this syncretism.

⁷² The literature on Serapis and the problems concerning his introduction into Alexandria is vast. For one recent hypothesis, see W.M. Ellis, *Ptolemy of Egypt* (New York 1994) 30–32.

⁷³ See infra p. 725.

⁷⁴ J.G. Griffiths, *De Iside et Osiride* (Cambridge 1970) 41–44.

⁷⁵ Griffiths (supra n. 74) 16–17.

⁷⁶ Griffiths (supra n. 74) 46.

⁷⁷ Adriani 1956, 81–82.

Kom el-Shoqafa complex preserve the same image,⁷⁸ as does the tomb from Ramleh.⁷⁹ Cognate images are found on Egyptian amulets and Graeco-Roman magical rings,⁸⁰ in the Roman-period Tomb of Petosiris in the Dachla Oasis⁸¹ and of House 21 at Touna el-Gebel,⁸² on Graeco-Roman tombstones⁸³ and Roman-period mummy cases,⁸⁴ and on earlier Egyptian papyri of the Book of the Dead.⁸⁵ Yet from all these, the image in the Tigrane Tomb differs.

The representation in the central niche of the Main Tomb at Kom el-Shoqafa,⁸⁶ for example, the extant parallel closest geographically, shows the mummy laid out on an Egyptian lion-bier, which displays the atef crown of Osiris on its lion-head and holds the feather of truth in its lion-paw. The deceased is attended by Anubis, or a priest in an Anubis mask, who is, at least symbolically, presiding over the embalming of the corpse. Below the bed canopic jars are set to receive the viscera of the deceased. Although the Roman-period Kom el-Shoqafa relief is of a softer style than the traditional Egyptian style, in this relief—as in the other images adduced—the traditional Egyptian iconography and basic Egyptian style are retained for the image. In striking contrast to these other images, the mummy in the Tigrane Tomb is an aggressively Roman mummy, laid on a Roman couch, his head on a Roman fulcrum; there is no crown, and Anubis—if he is intended to be present at all—is relegated to the lateral faces of the pilasters. He does not attend to the deceased, and consequently the canopic jars are also absent. As narratives, the scenes in the two other niches of the Tigrane Tomb are unique.

Despite this lack of correspondence with known models, individual iconographic elements do appear in the scenes of the Tigrane Tomb that can be paralleled elsewhere. All these individual elements lead toward an Isiac interpretation for the subject matter of the tomb paintings, and it is with Isiac initiates that I would connect the tomb.

Most easily recognizable as Isiac are the two Apis bulls painted on the jambs leading into the burial chamber. From the Hellenistic period onward, the Apis bull is intimately bound with Serapis and, consequently, with his consort, Isis. In the Serapeion of Alexandria, Isis was worshipped alongside Serapis. Arsinoe, the powerful sister-wife of Ptolemy II, took the title Isis Arsinoe Philadelphus, and later Ptolemaic queens are depicted in the guise of Isis on faience oinochoai.⁸⁷ During the reign of Ptolemy IV, coins were struck with the heads of Isis and Serapis face to face in place of heads of the royal couple.⁸⁸ But Isis was venerable in her own right. In founding the city of Alexandria, Alexander had named the foundation of only one temple, and that one was to Isis; subsequently the admiral Callicrates dedicated a temple to Isis and Anubis at Canopus on behalf of “King Ptolemy and Queen Arsinoe” and Ptolemy Philadelphus himself began the large Isis temple at Philae, which was completed by his successor, Ptolemy Euergetes.⁸⁹ Isis could be understood and accepted in Hellenic terms—Athenians, Ionians, and Eretrians had already met her⁹⁰—and Greeks could associate her with Demeter.⁹¹ Yet, she was also important because she was powerful, Egyptian, and venerable. Diodorus (1.25) credits her as

⁷⁸ See Rowe (supra n. 32) 32, who describes one of the tombs. Empereur (personal communication) has made out four painted niches with this scene in the Hall of Caracalla. I can make out only two. Empereur suggests that the increasing humidity has permitted the current visibility of these images, which are preserved, for the most part, as ghost images on the white plastered walls of the niches. The decoration of these niches will be published by Merwat Seif el Din and Anne-Marie Guimier-Sorbets.

⁷⁹ Breccia (supra n. 12) 53.

⁸⁰ See C. Bonner, *Studies in the Magical Amulets Chiefly Graeco-Egyptian* (Oxford 1950) 254–55, nos. 8–11 and pl. 1; *LIMC* VI.1, 783 no. 3a, s.v. Nephthys (V. Tran Tam Tinh); *LIMC* I.1, 5 no. 54, s.v. Abraxas (M. Le Glay); and I.2, pl. 13 = Bonner 254, no. 8.

⁸¹ Osing et al. (supra n. 61) pls. 26b (room 1, north wall); 28a (room 2, north wall); 29b (room 2, east wall).

⁸² S. Gabra, *Peintures à fresques et scènes peintes à Hermopolis-Ouest (Touna el-Gebel)* (Cairo 1954) pl. 29.

⁸³ See, e.g., A. Abdalla, *Graeco-Roman Funerary Stelae from Upper Egypt* (Liverpool 1992) 106–107 no. 15, pl. 28a; no.

101, pl. 39c; and no. 167.

⁸⁴ E.g., Cairo inv. CG 33221, Corcoran (supra n. 47) pl. 16.

⁸⁵ See, e.g., A. Niwiński, *Studies on the Illustrated Theban Funerary Papyri of the 11th and 10th Centuries BC.* (Göttingen 1989) figs. 36–38.

⁸⁶ See supra n. 25.

⁸⁷ D.B. Thompson, *Ptolemaic Oinochoai and Portraits in Faience: Aspects of the Ruler-Cult* (Oxford 1973).

⁸⁸ F. Le Corsu, *Isis: Mythe et mystères* (Paris 1977) 84; possibly to legitimize the marriage of brother and sister.

⁸⁹ A.E. Samuel, *From Athens to Alexandria: Hellenism and Social Goals in Ptolemaic Egypt* (Lovanii 1983) 84.

⁹⁰ See C.C. Edgar, “An Ionian Dedication to Isis,” *JHS* 24 (1904) 337; S. Dow, “The Egyptian Cults in Athens,” *HThR* 30 (1937) 183–232; V.F. Vanderlip, *The Four Greek Hymns of Isidorus and the Cult of Isis* (American Studies in Papyrology 12, Toronto 1972) 77; Samuel (supra n. 89) 83.

⁹¹ E.g., Hdt. 2.59, 156; Diod. 1.13–14, 25, 96; 5.69. See Vanderlip (supra n. 90) 21–23, 25.

a healing goddess, who gave her remedies during sleep to those who sought her aid. Her cult grew and spread throughout the Mediterranean in Hellenistic times, and by the Roman Imperial period, Apuleius (11.2) can have her speak of herself as the queen of heaven. In the second century A.D., Isis had assumed ascendancy over Serapis.⁹²

In the Tigrane Tomb, Isis appears in the mummy scene; but that scene, despite its idiosyncracies, contains a stock funerary motif, so her appearance there is of little consequence for my argument. More important for my thesis are the two males at the entrance to the burial chamber. Their garments are bound under their pectorals in the manner of garments worn by *pastophoroi* and other functionaries in the cult of Isis.⁹³ The situlas that they carry are Isiac cultic vessels, which—although realizing subtle differentiations in form—are generally characterized by their high looped handle, flaring mouth, and piriform shape with a knob at the bottom. Apuleius in *Metamorphoses* (11.10) describes the Isiac situla as a round vessel in the shape of a breast from which milk flowed.⁹⁴ The vessels carried by the male figures are the most accurately and naturalistically depicted of all the objects painted in the tomb. Their bale-handles are delicately drawn, especially on the situla that the male on the right jamb carries in his left hand (see above, fig. 3), and curved lines indicate the rotundity of the body of the vessel. The two males and the Apis bulls are the first images that greet the visitor to the tomb; it is they who escort the visitor into the tomb, and their placement at the entrance to the burial chamber is key to the explication of the narrative scenes.

⁹² R.E. Witt, *Isis in the Graeco-Roman World* (London 1971) 54.

⁹³ The garment is unusually short, but knee-length garments are worn by two *pastophoroi* who carry a shrine of Harpocrates on a terracotta in Berlin (R. Merkelbach, *Isis regina—Zeus Serapis. Die griechisch-ägyptische Religion nach den Quellen dargestellt* [Stuttgart 1995] fig. 216 = W. Weber, *Die ägyptisch-griechischen Terracotten* III [Berlin 1914] pl. 12, no. 127). A “cleric,” posed frontally on a coffin board decorated in relief, wears a thigh-length garment tied just below his pectorals. He also wears two feathers, but they are set within rams’ horns (R.S. Bianchi, *Cleopatra’s Egypt: Age of the Ptolemies* [New York 1988] 240, no. 129). The coffin board dates to the Roman period and probably ca. A.D. 200 (Bianchi 241).

⁹⁴ I. Jenkins, “The Masks of Dionysos/Pan-Osiris-Apis,” *JdI* 109 (1994) 287 identifies the vessel as holding the holy water from the Nile, or the Isiac “milk of life.” Cf. a silver situla from Pompeii with engraved Isiac scenes (Merkelbach [supra n. 93] figs. 30–32); statue of Isis, holding the situla in her lowered left hand, from Ras el Soda (Alexandria) (A. Adriani, “Fouilles et découvertes. A) Alexandrie: 5. Sanctuaire de l’époque romaine à Ras el Soda,” *An-*

The two snakes that decorate the short walls flanking the entrance door (figs. 5–6) and protect the tomb are also identified with the cult of Isis. The poorly realized crown formed of sun disc and horns identifies the left snake as Isis-Thermouthis, although other attributes often associated with the Graeco-Roman form of this deity are lacking. Thermouthis, the Egyptian grain goddess, who frequently assumed the form of an asp or cobra, was equated with Isis and originally may have had mysteries in Egypt into which her worshippers were initiated.⁹⁵ The pschent crown and beard mark the right snake as Serapis—or the Agathos Daimon, the consort of Isis-Thermouthis or of Isis in her role as Agatha Tyche—although it, too, lacks further attributes.⁹⁶

The other elements in the painted program that relate to Isis deserve a lengthier explication. These references are oblique, and therefore more complicated and subtle than the two just mentioned, because they are set within the narratives and relate directly to initiation into her cult, a subject that could not be explicitly rendered. The left niche (fig. 11), which is a fusion of the normal and the unique, holds the key to the interpretation.

The iconography of the left niche raises problems that are treated below, but its central composition, which has as its focal point the frontal figure, is based on an easily recognizable Egypto-Roman funerary model: the deceased posed frontally, often set between two jackals. On a stele in the form of a naiskos in the Alexandria Museum,⁹⁷ for example, the deceased man, garbed in a toga and standing in front of a door, is flanked by two jackals seated on chests, and this configuration is common on less

naire du Musée Gréco-Romain 1935–1939 [1940] pl. 55.1). The situla figured by Breccia (supra n. 32) 163, fig. 73 is a variant, having like ours a narrow neck, but lacking the broad mouth. See Jenkins (supra) 288, fig. 14 for drawings of other forms that Isiac situlae take.

⁹⁵ Vanderlip (supra n. 90) 20. For Thermouthis see Ael. *NA* 10.31. See also second hymn to Isis (lines 2 and 29), third hymn to Isis (line 1), and fourth hymn to Isis (line 1), where she is addressed as Hermouthis; Vanderlip (supra n. 90) 34–35, 63. The depiction of the snake in the Tigrane Tomb is close to an image of Thermouthis in a Dynasty XII shrine at Medinet Madi (Vanderlip pl. 11). For other images of Isis-Thermouthis as a snake (in these cases, a cobra), see *LIMC* V.1, 788 nos. 332–44, s.v. Isis (V. Tran Tam Tinh).

⁹⁶ Cf. the terracotta in Berlin figured in Merkelbach (supra n. 93) 80, drawing 22; see also *LIMC* I, pls. 204–206, nos. 13–15, 17, 20, 31, 35, s.v. Agathodaimon (F. Dunand); *LIMC* V, pl. 524, nos. 333–34, 337, 344a, s.v. Isis (V. Tran Tam Tinh); see also Vanderlip (supra n. 90) 21 for discussion and further bibliography.

⁹⁷ Pagenstecher (supra n. 17) 123, fig. 79; Schreiber (supra n. 6) 126, fig. 70.

well executed grave stelae from Kom about Bellou.⁹⁸ Osiris himself may appear in a similar composition: the drawing of the Sieglin Tomb cannot be read with absolute certainty,⁹⁹ but the central frontal figure flanked by two goddesses who embrace him with their wings seems to be crowned as Osiris; we see him depicted in a similar way on an unusually well carved stele from Kom about Bellou—mummiform in rhombic-patterned wrappings, wearing the atef crown, flanked by a frontal human female at left, and embraced at the right by a winged Nephthys.¹⁰⁰

Although the configuration of the central composition is standard for both humans and Osiris, the characterization of the figures that comprise the Tigrane scene (with the exception of the jackals) is unparalleled elsewhere. The garment of the frontal figure (fig. 12) is exceedingly short and decorated with a rhombic pattern, and unless the scale pattern of his chest was meant as armor, his chest is bare; in that case he wears, at most, a pectoral around his neck. He is nearly nude, and he is bald; two objects that appear as shaggy horns emerge from either side of his head. Adriani sees in the rhombic pattern of the frontal figure's lower garment the mummy bandages of Osiris and identifies the scene as the resurrection of Osiris.¹⁰¹ The pattern of the garment differs from that of the mummy laid out in the central niche, but I agree with Adriani and accept his interpretation of the pattern, although not his identification of the figure.

A rhombic-bandaged figure greets us on the stele from Kom about Bellou mentioned above, but that figure is mummiform and capped with the atef crown of the deity. Nothing about the Tigrane figure is Osirid, nor is rhombic-bandaging limited to Osiris or, in fact, to mummies: in a small marble statue from the sanctuary of Isis on the acropolis of Cyrene,¹⁰² the deity is shown with a mantle held over her shoulders, a rhombic-patterned garment worn over her chiton (fig. 24). She stands in the iconic stance of images like the Ephesian Artemis,¹⁰³ and Merkelbach¹⁰⁴ sees her as rising from the dead, because although the lower part of her body is wrapped, the upper part is freed from the bandaging. So is that of the Tigrane frontal figure. Merkelbach believes

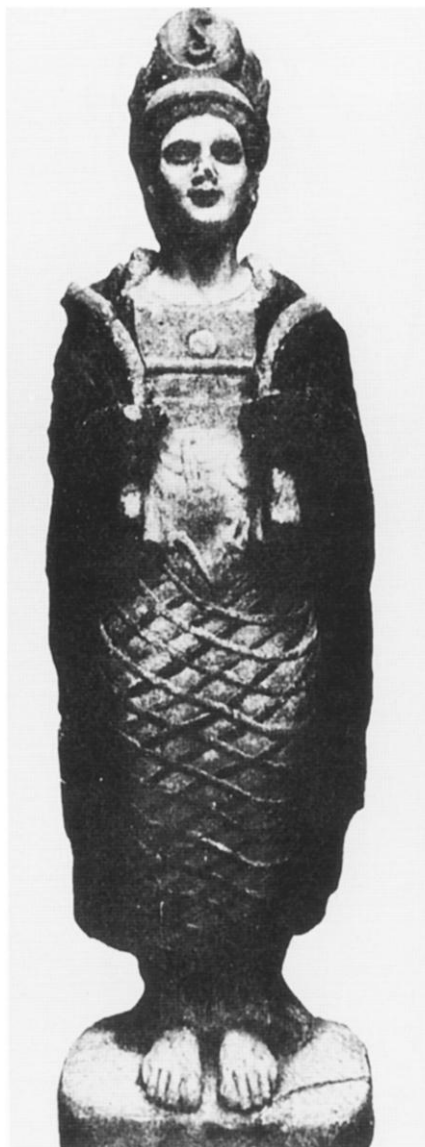


Fig. 24. Statuette from acropolis of Cyrene. (After E. Paribeni, *Catalogo delle sculture di Cirene* [Rome 1959] pl. 175)

that the Cyrene statuette reflects an initiation ceremony in which the initiate is first wrapped up as a mummy and ceremonially buried, then later liberated and brought back to life.¹⁰⁵ I propose that the

⁹⁸ See A.H. Abdul-Al, J.-C. Grenier, and G. Wagner, *Stèles funéraires de Kôm Abu Bellou* (Paris 1985) 64–65 nos. 27–45. In some (nos. 27–41) the jackals are seated on the ground, while in others (nos. 42, 43, 45) they sit on bases in the form of naos-chests, in a manner similar to the jackals on the stele in Alexandria; see also El-Nassery and Wagner (supra n. 45) pl. 72.12–13.

⁹⁹ See supra ns. 26 and 41.

¹⁰⁰ Cairo inv. 1065, El-Nassery and Wagner (supra n. 45) 258, no. 58, pl. 86.

¹⁰¹ Adriani 1956, 72.

¹⁰² E. Paribeni, *Catalogo delle sculture di Cirene: Statue e rilievi di carattere religioso* (Rome 1959) 142, no. 411, pl. 175.

¹⁰³ Paribeni (supra n. 102).

¹⁰⁴ Merkelbach (supra n. 93) 586, caption to figs. 109–10.

¹⁰⁵ Merkelbach (supra n. 93) 172, section 328. On 172, section 329, Merkelbach cites an episode in the Osiris myth related by Plut. *De Is. et Os.* 356B–356D, which he believes concerns a cultic performance. D. Levi, “Mors Voluntaria: Mystery Cults on Mosaics from Antioch,” *Berytus* 7 (1942) 24 also identifies the Cyrene statuette as an “image of an Isiac mystes.”

Tigrane frontal figure also represents an initiate into the cult, and perhaps into the mysteries of Isis.

Isiac mysteries are known from lands throughout the Roman empire. The ceremony is best explicated in the *Metamorphoses* of Apuleius of Madauros to which I have already referred, written in the second century A.D. a few decades after the painting of the Tigrane Tomb.¹⁰⁶ In book 11, Apuleius describes the transformation of his protagonist, Lucius, from ass to man, and the subsequent initiation of Lucius into the mysteries of Isis at Kenchreai, the port of Corinth. In Egypt, mysteries to Isis (and Serapis) may have begun as early as the Ptolemaic period and were certainly in place under Roman rule. Rooms in the Serapeion have been seen as set aside for initiation into the mysteries,¹⁰⁷ and two papyri from Oxyrhynchus preserve fragments of an oath sworn at an Isiac initiation ceremony.¹⁰⁸

Lucius's experiences at Kenchreai may not provide a perfect correspondence for Isiac mysteries in Alexandria,¹⁰⁹ but some of the details described in his initiation can be used to help illuminate the images in the Tigrane Tomb. Visual monuments from outside Egypt also provide useful parallels for iconographic details in our painted program, although they differ radically from the Tigrane Tomb in both style and substance.

The lateral niches of the Tigrane Tomb (figs. 11 and 15) carry the scenes that can best be seen as relating to initiation into the cult of Isis. First, let us

return to the frontal figure in the left niche (fig. 12): he stands in very much the same pose as the statuette of the Isis-initiate from the acropolis of Cyrene—legs tight together, arms before his body. He has a shaven head, characteristic of priests and male initiates of Isis,¹¹⁰ and he is nearly nude, possibly another characteristic of initiates. A mosaic from House 20-0 at Antioch, for example, shows what Levi identifies as a *mystes*, “half naked, barefoot, with only a cloth thrown over his shoulder and perhaps wrapped around his waist”¹¹¹ (the mosaic is damaged at this point), but Levi's initiate covers his head with an elaborate cloth. The headdress and garment of the Tigrane figure are more similar to those worn by participants in Isiac ceremonies portrayed on two Roman reliefs in the Vatican.

The first relief¹¹² is on a column base (fig. 25). It shows a group of figures surrounded by Isiac cult paraphernalia apparently engaged in a sacrifice to the deity. The two figures that interest us are both frontal males. One wears a garment that wraps his lower body so closely that it resembles pants; he covers his head with a cloth that holds two feathers. With his feet and legs together and hands clasped before his chest, his pose duplicates that of the Tigrane figure. The second male, who grasps a tall reed with both hands, wears a garment tied around his waist, his torso bare, and like the first, he wears a headcloth holding two feathers.

The second relief (fig. 26) takes the form of a

¹⁰⁶ For the date, see J.G. Griffiths, *Apuleius of Madauros: The Isis-Book (Metamorphoses Book XI)* (Leiden 1975) 8–10. Griffiths (10) accepts a date of A.D. 170.

¹⁰⁷ There are 19 subterranean rooms in the Alexandrian Serapeion, vaulted and opening onto a corridor paved with marble and cut in two lengthwise by a colonnade. Rufinus, a fourth-century A.D. Christian priest, maintains that they were secret rooms for “mysterious functions”; see Rowe (supra n. 59) 22–23, pls. 8–9. Given the bias of the source, however, the veracity of the observation must be questioned.

¹⁰⁸ Merkelbach (supra n. 93) 170, section 325 (Pap. Soc. It. 1162 and 1290); see also Merkelbach, “Der Eid der Isismysten,” *ZPE* 1 (1967) 72–73: “I swear by him that has divided from one another the heaven and the earth and darkness from light and day from night and rising from setting and life from death and generation (γένεσις) from destruction (φθορά) and black from white and dry from wet and water from land and bitter from sweet and flesh from spirit, I swear also by the gods, whom I falling to my knees revere: to keep and hold secret the sacred mysteries, which were imparted to me. . . . If I keep my oath, may all turn out well for me, and the opposite, if I break the oath, if I give anything away.” For the identification of the deity whose mysteries are the object of the oath, Merkelbach (72–73) cites Plut. *De Is. et Os.* 382C: “the philosophy of Isis concerns the material: for her essential power

concerns the material, which becomes everything and receives everything: light, darkness; day, night; fire, water; life, death; beginning, end.”

¹⁰⁹ Griffiths (supra n. 106) 6 believes that, with minor reservations, Apuleius is conveying his own experiences as an Isis initiate, concerned with particular rite in particular place, that is, Kenchreai. Griffiths does note, however (355), that F. Dunand, *Le culte d'Isis dans le bassin oriental de la Méditerranée: Le culte d'Isis en Grèce 2* (Leiden 1973) 60 makes the “plausible comment” that insofar as the Temple of Isis is concerned, Apuleius is not necessarily following the exact details of a particular temple, but is probably drawing on the rational pattern of the temples of Isis.

¹¹⁰ Egyptian priests shaved their heads (Hdt. 2.36–37). Plut. *De Is. et Os.* 352C is concerned not with priests, but specifically with Isiac initiates. Apuleius confirms Plutarch's statement: Lucius (*Met.* 11.10) describes men in the crowd of initiates with shaven heads; he also describes (*Met.* 11.28) his own shaving upon his second initiation (see Griffiths [supra n. 74] 269) and (*Met.* 11.30) when he is about to join the college of pastaphoroi and become a priest.

¹¹¹ Levi (supra n. 105) 28.

¹¹² G. Lippold, *Die Skulpturen des vaticanischen Museums* (Berlin 1956) 270, no. 40, pl. 123, dated by Lippold to the third century A.D.



Fig. 25. Musei Vaticani, Museo Pio Clementino, Galleria dei Candelabri, inv. 2547. Figures from a column base showing Isiac cult scene: at far left, male holding reed; at center, frontal male with headdress. (Photo Museum, neg. 21.13.16)

large plaque.¹¹³ Isiac priests and priestesses, identified by their garments and the vessels and objects that they bear, process from left to right. The second figure in the procession, identified as a *hierogrammateus* by the scroll he carries,¹¹⁴ wears a garment reaching to mid-calf and rolled up and bound at the waist; his chest is bare, and he wears a band across his forehead, which holds two feathers in place.¹¹⁵ The more explicitly treated headdress of this figure explains the peculiar configuration worn by the Tigrane frontal figure (see above, fig. 12): it is a band, perhaps bejeweled, binding two feathers to his shaven crown. The Tigrane frontal figure's coffer-patterned attire, however, and his association with jackals do encourage a more precise interpretation of the figure itself as an initiate participating in the resurrection ceremony that Merkelbach convincingly reconstructs.¹¹⁶

The frontal figure of the left niche and the kneeling figure of the right niche, although dissimilarly garbed, are connected thematically by the palm branches that they both bear. These palm fronds also connect these two figures to the deities in the central niche who also hold palms. Palm branches are associated with gods of the Osiran cycle¹¹⁷ and probably have an association with renewed life when shown in a funerary connection.¹¹⁸ They are also intimately associated with the cult of Isis. On a painted frieze from Pompeii a priest with shaven head and bared chest raises a palm branch in his right hand, and another priest (who holds out a snake) has a palm branch set behind him.¹¹⁹

The palms painted in all three scenes are explicit connections to the Isis cult, as are the shafts of wheat that the goddess in the right niche holds out to the kneeling man in return for the palms he offers her. The drawing is not entirely convincing, but the stubby, golden objects held out by the goddess can only be ears of wheat. They find a parallel, in proportion if not in execution, in two bronze shafts of wheat

¹¹³ W. Amelung, *Die Sculpturen des vaticanischen Museums II* (Berlin 1908) 142–45, Cortile del Bevedere no. 55 and pl. 7, dated by Amelung to the Hadrianic period.

¹¹⁴ See Diod. 1.87.

¹¹⁵ Amelung (supra n. 113) 143–44. Cf. the two feathers worn by the priest in the reliefs from the Main Grave at Kom el-Shoqafa (Schreiber [supra n. 6] pl. 28).

¹¹⁶ See supra n. 105 and Merkelbach (supra n. 93) 158, section 295 and fig. 197 for a sarcophagus (Rome, Terme from Aricia) that he also adduces.

¹¹⁷ Griffiths (supra n. 106) 202, most closely with Anubis (198–203); Griffiths (219) cites *PGM* 12, 227–28 (a papyrus at Leiden, perhaps second century): “I am the

plant with the name Palm-branch. I am the efflux of the blood of the palm-branches from the tomb of the Great One [Osiris].” See Anubis with palm branch, e.g., on a Roman grave monument, J.-C. Grenier, *L'autel funéraire isiaque de Fabria Stratonice* (Leiden 1978); for another, in the Capitoline Museum, see Merkelbach (supra n. 93) 614, fig. 144 = Helbig⁴ 1189. See also similar images on two relief plaques; Merkelbach (supra n. 93) 616–17, figs. 146–47.

¹¹⁸ Griffiths (supra n. 106) 203, 219.

¹¹⁹ See Merkelbach (supra n. 93) 496–97, figs. 11–12.

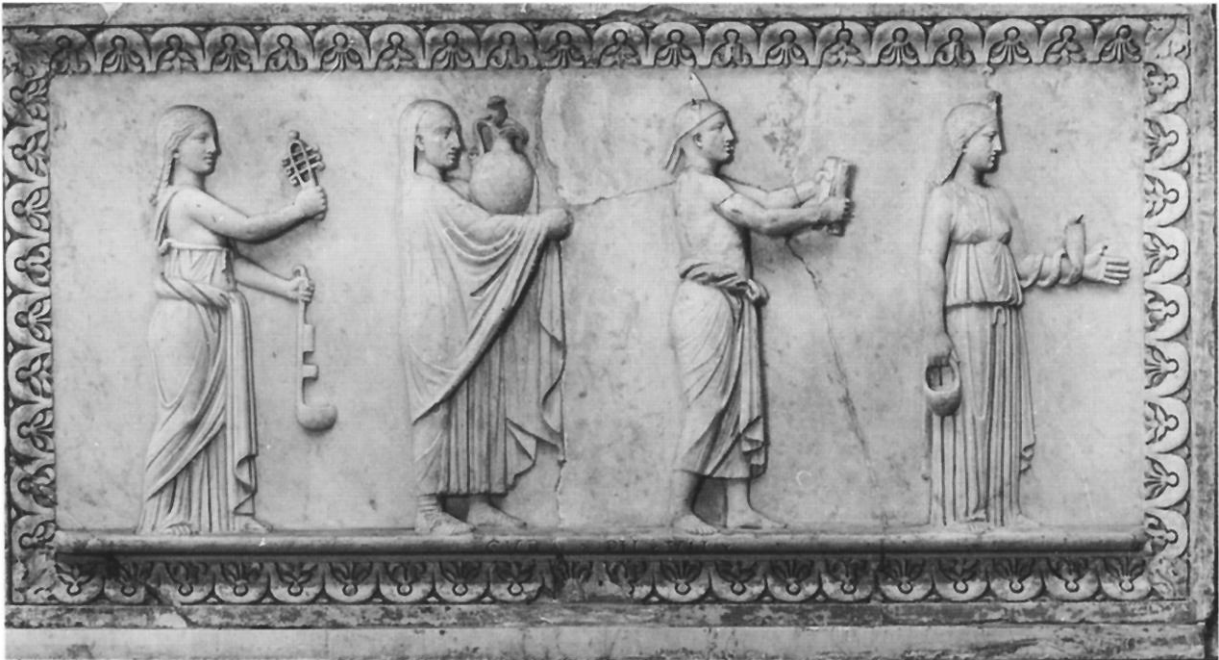


Fig. 26. Vatican 16637; detail of plaque with Isiac procession. (Photo Museum, neg. 35.20.80/4)

from a tomb of a priest of Isis at Nîmes¹²⁰ and bear even closer relation to wheat held by an Agathodaimon in a relief in Berlin.¹²¹ Wheat is an attribute of Isis: she appears as early as the Hellenistic period with the epithet *εὐεργέτεια καρπῶν, εὐεργέτεια*;¹²² the hymns of Isidorus from Medinet Madi celebrate the harvest in her name;¹²³ Diodorus (1.14.2) credits her with the discovery of wheat; and in her guise as IsisThermouthis she is often depicted with ears of wheat.¹²⁴ The fringed garment of the deity in the right niche also connects her to Isis, as do the fringed garments of the goddesses in the central niche; a fringed garment is one of the details noted by Lucius in his description of Isis in the *Metamorphoses* (11.3), although pictorially fringes normally decorate the garment that Isis binds over her breast.¹²⁵

Besides the palms held by the male figures, the scenes in the two lateral niches of the Tigrane Tomb

are further related iconographically by the ovoid (or elliptical) objects on pedestals that frame each scene. Adriani interprets them as tympana.¹²⁶ They were certainly intended as meaningful, substituting for the Horus falcons that flank the central niche, and although tympana are a reasonable interpretation (based on the connection between Osiris and Dionysos), visually the interpretation suffers: tympana would scarcely stand upright in the position of these objects, nor are any of the details that distinguish tympana indicated. I propose that the objects are greatly oversized eggs, their size and the fillets with which they are bound dependent on the importance eggs carry in the cult of Isis. Eggs have always been a Greek symbol of rebirth or regeneration;¹²⁷ they are also part of the Isiac cult meal,¹²⁸ and a feature of the cult of Isis.¹²⁹

The scenes in the two lateral niches are further

¹²⁰ M.-P. Foissy-Aufrère, *Civilization, survivances et "Cabinet de curiosité"* (Avignon 1985) 151, section 359 and fig. 69c.

¹²¹ Berlin, Egyptian Museum 8164, *LIMC* V.1, 788 no. 341, fig. on 788, s.v. Isis (V. Tran Tam Tinh).

¹²² Vanderlip (supra n. 90) 22–23.

¹²³ Vanderlip (supra n. 90) passim, esp. 45; see also F. Dunand, *Le culte d'Isis dans le bassin oriental de la Méditerranée 1: Le culte d'Isis et les Ptolémées* (Leiden 1973) 219–21.

¹²⁴ See, e.g., Berlin, Egyptian Museum 20004, a statue of Isis-Kourotrophos from Carinola with a representation of Thermouthis and the Agathos Daimon on the back of its base (see V. Tran Tam Tinh, *Le culte des divinités orientales en Campanie en dehors de Pompéi, de Stabies et d'Herulanum* (Leiden 1971) 79–80 and pl. 6, fig. 7 = *LIMC* I, 278 no.

14, pl. 205, s.v. Agathodaimon (F. Dunand) and a relief in Turin (Tran Tam Tinh [supra] pl. 7, fig. 8); see also Cairo JE 47108: *LIMC* V, 773 no. 174, pl. 510, s.v. Isis (V. Tran Tam Tinh).

¹²⁵ Cf., e.g., *LIMC* V, 765 no. 22, 767 no. 52, 778 nos. 229–31, 233, s.v. Isis (V. Tran Tam Tinh).

¹²⁶ Adriani 1956, 83.

¹²⁷ See, e.g., the ceramic eggs from graves in the Athenian Kerameikos; D.C. Kurtz and J. Boardman, *Greek Burial Customs* (Ithaca 1971) 77.

¹²⁸ See, e.g., remnants of the priests' meal from the Iseum at Pompeii; Witt (supra n. 92) pl. 29.

¹²⁹ Griffiths (supra n. 106) 261, although most of his examples concern the purification of ships.

connected by the garments of the figures: the two males that flank the idiosyncratically garbed frontal figure wear tight trousers, scale-patterned tunics (the left figure), and helmet-like nemes headdresses as does the kneeling figure of the right niche. The military aspect of these three figures may denote the owner or owners of the tomb as soldiers, a reasonable inference given the strong military component of the Alexandrian population.

The imagery that departs from standard religious or funerary iconography and the specificity of the narrative that unites the three niches into a cohesive program separate the Tigrane Tomb from other Alexandrian funerary monuments. On the one hand, these anomalies make it unlikely that the tomb served as a family tomb; on the other hand, the tomb's small size rules out its function as a public burial place. These two considerations suggest that the Tigrane Tomb was constructed for a specific segment of the population. The so-called Soldiers' Tomb, an early Ptolemaic hypogeum from Ibrahimiyah in the eastern necropolis, can be determined from its inscribed loculus slabs to have been built for soldiers of an Alexandrian garrison and their families,¹³⁰ and I propose that the tomb from Tigrane Pasha Street was constructed specifically for members of an Isiac dining club.

Voluntary associations that performed private devotions to deities are known independently in both Greece and Egypt, and in Egypt they are attested in papyri written in both demotic and Greek.¹³¹ The establishment of one institution must have influenced the establishment of the other, and these guilds demonstrate the interweaving of Greek and Egyptian ideologies in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt and the complexity of the tangled strands. Almost certainly based on military and occupational associations, which also had a basis in religion, guilds served social functions as well as religious purposes.¹³² From the Hellenistic period on, these religious guilds

were often founded by a single individual; in them, members practiced a type of private, communal worship that centered on a specific deity or hero. Men and women who had been initiated into a particular mystery also sometimes remained members of the group having a "sort of corporate existence and corporate relation to the temple in which the solemn rite was celebrated."¹³³

Laws governing these associations describe members' responsibilities, which included processions, festivals, and sacrifices to the deity, and periodic feasts and drinks in honor of the divinity.¹³⁴ A stele from Apameia on the Propontis, dated either 119 B.C. or A.D. 93 and dedicated to Apollo and Meter Kybele by a guild, shows in a panel under a sacrificial scene the members of the association – the *θιασῶται* and *θιασωτίτες* – enjoying a festive banquet, "enlivened by musicians and a dancer, and with a copious supply of drink and souvlakia."¹³⁵ In Egypt, the so-called "couch of Serapis" was a society nominally dining with the god at its head, but which also met in the temples of other deities and occasionally in private houses.¹³⁶

Religious guilds were also burial societies and had rules governing the obligations of the members for funerals of their colleagues. These requirements normally included feasts in honor of the deceased.¹³⁷ Alexandrian tomb chambers that reproduced the triclinium format may have been constructed not only to recall the funerary banquet or symbolically heroize the dead, but also to perpetuate for guild members a sense of community after their death. The Tigrane Tomb with its extended Isiac program would be a fitting place to lay to rest members of an Isiac dining guild.

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¹³⁰ Brown (supra n. 9) 20.

¹³¹ On religious guilds in Egypt, see C.C. Roberts, T.C. Skeat, and A.D. Nock, "The Guild of Zeus Hysistos," *HThR* 29 (1936) 39–88; A.E.R. Boak, "The Organization of Guilds in Greco-Roman Egypt," *TAPA* 68 (1937) 212–20; F. de Cenival, "Les associations dans les temples égyptiens d'après les données fournies par les papyrus démotiques," *Religions en Égypte hellénistique et romaine* (Paris 1969) 5–19; de Cenival (supra n. 46); Shore (supra n. 46), M.-F. Baslez, "Une association isiaque: Les mélanéphores," *ChrEg* 50 (1975) 297–303. Shore 17–18 privileges Greece; Roberts et al. (passim) argue for an Egyptian origin, which is challenged by Boak (passim). De Cenival (supra n. 46) 213 also believes in an Egyptian origin for the guilds. On religious guilds in Greece,

see W.S. Ferguson, "The Attic Orgeones," *HThR* 37 (1944) 61–140; and Ferguson, "Orgeonika," in *Commemorative Studies in Honor of Theodore Leslie Shear (Hesperia Suppl. 8, 1949)* 130–63.

¹³² Roberts et al. (supra n. 131) 74.

¹³³ Roberts et al. (supra n. 131) 76.

¹³⁴ See, e.g., de Cenival (supra n. 46) 177–83.

¹³⁵ Athens NM 1485; see van Straten (supra n. 62) 263 and fig. 32 = I.N. Svoronos, *Das Athener Nationalmuseum II* (Athens 1911) 619, no. 258, pl. 112; and *LIMC* II.1, 299 no. 964, s.v. Apollon (O. Palagia) and II.2, pl. 267.

¹³⁶ Roberts et al. (supra n. 131) 78.

¹³⁷ See, e.g., Boak (supra n. 131) 218; de Cenival (supra n. 46) 187.