



Regional Variations in the Architecture of Tombs in Roman Egypt

Lilian Shawky Habib ^a , Youssri Abdelwahed ^b ,
Ali Omar Abdallah ^c

^a Ph.D. Researcher, Tourist Guidance Department, Faculty of Tourism and Hotels, Minia University

^b Professor, Tourist Guidance Department, Faculty of Tourism and Hotels, Minia University

^c Professor, Tourist Guidance Department, Faculty of Tourism and Hotel, Helwan University

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Abstract

This article considers regional variations in the architecture of Roman-period tombs in Egypt; it highlights the differences between the tombs of Alexandria and those in the *chora* in terms of the planning and other architectural and, to a lesser extent, iconographical elements. Funerary architecture in the tombs of Roman Egypt is the outcome of the cultural syncretism experienced by the Egyptian and non-Egyptian inhabitants (the Greeks and Romans in particular) through religion, myth, and beliefs in the afterlife, which appear to have slightly varied from one region to another. The article addresses the variations in the layout and architectural styles of the Roman-period tombs. It uses descriptive and analytical methods to analyze the archaeological evidence of the Roman-period tombs. By analyzing such archaeological evidence, the study aims to demonstrate how death unifies different ethnic groups in funerary practices, revealing a wide array of tomb types, architectural styles that come across different cultural backgrounds and regions in Roman Egypt, the variation in the architectural elements, and also analyzing the reasons behind the existence of certain elements in certain tombs like the triclinium in Roman Alexandrian tombs.

Tomb Types in the Regions of Roman Egypt

The tombs in Roman Egypt display a mix of Egyptian, Greek, and Roman architectural styles and religious beliefs, indicating a cultural syncretism experienced by the diverse population in the region. A wide variety of tomb types occurs in Roman Egypt, ranging from simple pit graves to rock-cut chamber tombs and hypogea, and many earlier tombs were additionally re-used. Above-ground structures, where they exist, range from simple markers to larger multi-chambered structures. Tomb types vary from one place to another. Decoration also varies widely, but this paper focuses on the architecture and the use of decorations in imitating architectural elements like bricks, stones and pilastered columns.

The Alexandrian Tombs

Strabo calls the burial ground of Alexandria the "necropolis" or "the city of the dead", a place of the tombs, gardens, and workshops of the embalmers (Strabo, *Geography* 17.1.10.). Excavations in the city have revealed several cemeteries with pit graves and rock-cut tombs of various types and multi-chambered *hypogea* (Riad et al. 1987, 52-59). Evidence from the settlements to the west of the city of Alexandria confirms the existence of above-ground structures over tombs in the form of hypogea. Alexandria's cemeteries are all situated under the streets of the modern city; consequently, the tomb superstructures have been destroyed (Corbelli 2006, 20; Tkaczow 1993, 65-66). Although Alexandrian cemeteries were hewn in the rock, we have information of some superstructures that once completed the layout of Alexandrian hypogea but unfortunately, they have all collapsed and disappeared (Haggag, M. 2018, 95–114). The standard form of the burial chambers in the Roman-period tombs of Alexandria is the *triclinium* with three sarcophagi positioned at right angles (McKenzie 2007, 193-194; Corbelli 2006, 21). The architecture of the Alexandrian tombs is going to be displayed as following.

The Catacomb of Kom El-Shoqafa

The catacomb at Kom el-Shoqafa is the best-known tomb complex in Alexandria. It is one of the most inspired monuments of Alexandrian funerary architecture; the disposition of the elements of the tomb is on a vertical rather than a horizontal axis (Venit 2002a, 124-145). It consists of two hypogea: the first is the main hypogeum that is celebrated for its main tomb; the second, situated to the east, is better known as the Hall of Caracalla (Abdelwahed 2015, 236).

The main hypogeum is a vast multiroom complex, which consists of a ground-level funerary chapel and three underground levels used as burial places for funerary ritual and entombment (Riad et al. 1987, 52-59). It seems that the main hypogeum was originally a family tomb; the plan of the nucleus on the second level follows the concept of a Greek temple with a surrounding ambulatory providing access to the points of internment at the back. The complex was subsequently enlarged to incorporate galleries of *loculi*, and may have passed into the hands of one of the burial guilds prevalent in the Roman period (Corbelli 2006, 17-18; Empereur 1995, 1-18).

The main hypogeum (figs.1a-1b) is accessed by a deep spiral stairway, which centers on a "rotunda". The first level consists of a vestibule with a double *exedrae* (benches within *arcosolia*) in the form of cockle-shells, each covered by a shell-shaped half-dome (fig.2), which is carved in the stone, a typical Alexandrian innovation that visually and physically tying the façade of the main tomb to the catacomb's entrance. At this level, there is a banqueting room in the form of a triclinium for the funeral feast, the *silicernium*, a meal to commemorate the dead, and memorial repasts (fig. 3). The second level constitutes the main tomb and its surrounding corridors, which contain a series of rows of rock-cut loculi and niches for sarcophagus burials; below is the third

level of tombs. The second and third levels are reached from the rotunda, the deep shaft, and the monumental staircase (Venit 2002a, 132-133, 2017, 66-67).

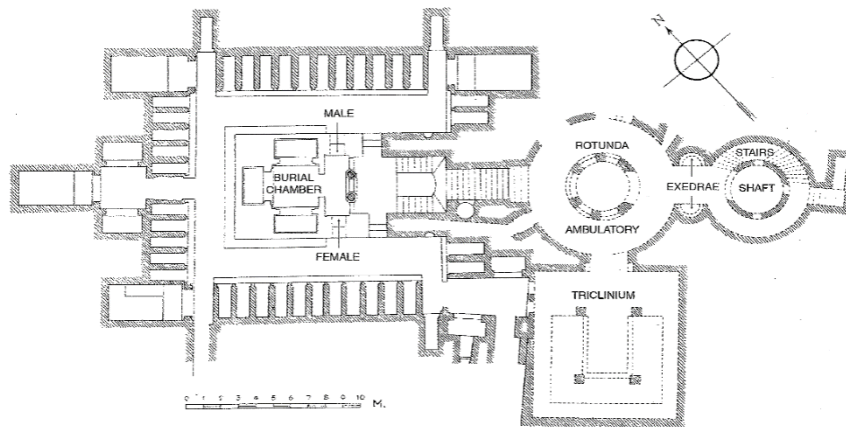


Figure 1a: The catacomb of Kom el-Shoqafa (after Venit 2002a, 125)

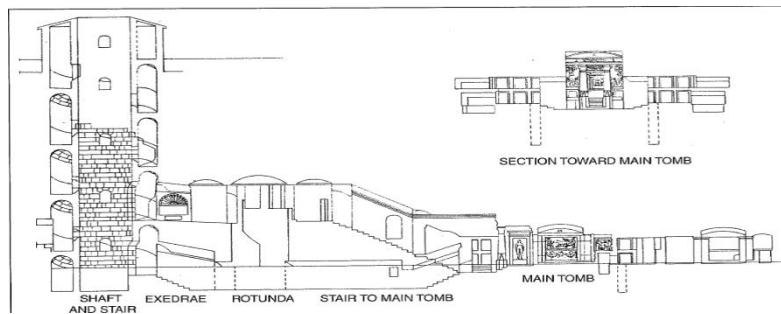
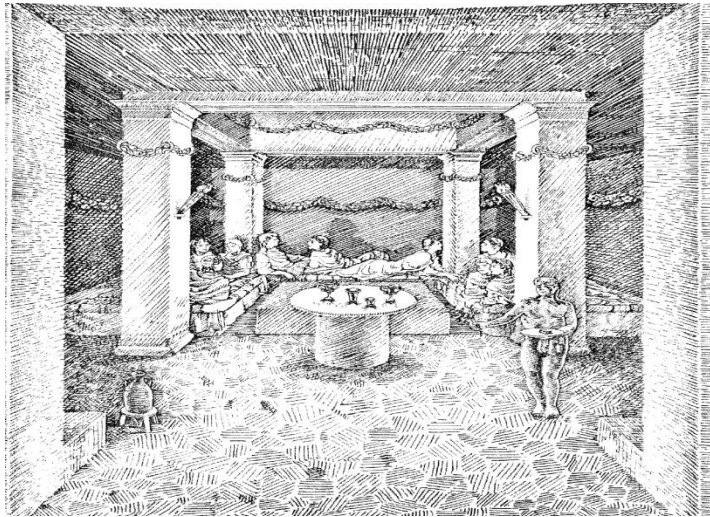


Figure 1 b: plan of the original section of the catacomb of kom el- shoqafa (after Venit, 2002 a, 126)



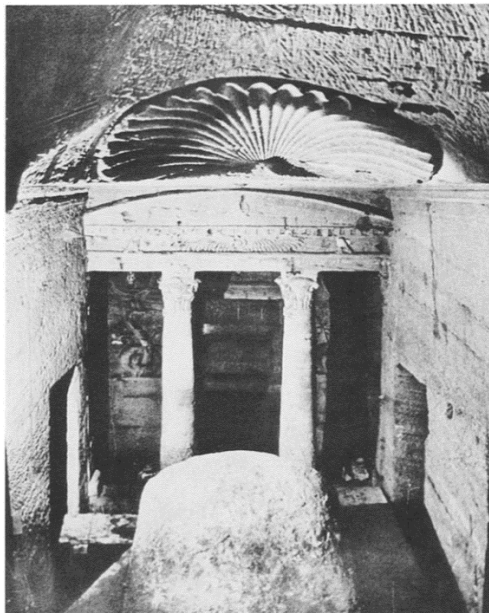
Figure 2: the exedrae in Kom el-Shoqafa, (after el Fakharani 1965, 57-62)



(Fig. 3) The triclinium of the main catacomb of Kom el-Shoqafa (after Venit, 2002a, 128).

The Main Tomb in the Catacomb at Kom el-Shoqafa

The main tomb assumes the plan of a Greek temple; it consists of an antechamber and a burial chamber with a pronaos in between. There is a semi-dome decoration on the top of the façade of the antechamber (fig. 4) (Fakharani 1965, 57-62). A flight of two steps leads up directly from the antechamber to the pronaos. The pronaos is introduced by two columns set between antae, which take the form of engaged pilasters carved with papyriform bases and capitals in Egyptian composite form with acanthus and lotus buds, which carry the heavy impost blocks that characterize Egyptian architecture. The reliefs carved on the architrave, showing a central winged sun-disc flanked by a Horus-falcon to either side, upon which a frieze of *uraei* surmounts. The architrave is capped by a row of Greek dentils; the façade is finished off with an Egyptian segmental pediment with a disc centered in its tympanum (fig. 5) (Venit, 2002b, 270-271, 2017, 68).



(Fig. 4) Semi-Dome at the façade of the antechamber in the main tomb at Kom el Shoqafa (after el Fakharani 1965, fig.2 <https://www.jstor.org/stable/502252> Accessed: 05-11-2018 08:38 UTC



(Fig. 5) The architrave and the columns of the façade of the antechamber of the main tomb of Kom El-Shoqafa.(source: <https://www.tripsinegypt.com/the-catacombs-of-kon-el-shoqafa/> Accessed/ Sep 13, 2018)

The plan of the burial chamber of the main tomb assumes a Roman form, where it takes the shape of a *triclinium* with three niches that contain rock-cut sarcophagi. Trabeated niches (but with arched ceilings) are cut into its walls to create its crucial form, and a rock-cut sarcophagus is set into each of the niches, giving the room its triclinium shape (Botti, 1898, 323-367). Apart from being a Roman modification of the *kline* chamber, and in addition to the triclinium form specifically identifying the sarcophagi as metaphorical banqueting couches, other considerations may also have prompted the cutting of triclinium-shaped burial rooms in Roman-period tombs. Certainly, the catacombs' real, usable *triclinium* fitted out with rock-cut *klinai* near the tomb's entrance demonstrates the importance of the funerary feast. The funerary and memorial feasts that took place at the tomb during the year commemorated the dead and heroized him or her. They might have propelled the eschatological impulse to memorialize the banquet of the dead in architectural form. The pronaos of the tomb, each of the three niches of the triclinium-shaped burial chamber is defined by engaged piers carved to repeat those of the antechamber. Each niche in the Main Tomb encloses a fully realized Roman garland sarcophagus, the Roman style rock-cut sarcophagi serving as the metaphorical banqueting couches, and each narrative that enlivens the walls of the niche is formed above with a classical egg- and-dart motif (Venit 2017, 70-71).

The third underground level is accessed via the “prompter’s box” (the doorway into the lower portion of the tomb, so named for its box-like appearance), the stairway, or the rotunda and the shaft (for dead bodies being lowered on a platform into the third underground level). Because the catacombs are three-storied, the fastest and easiest way to move the dead bodies would be through the center of the access shaft, as opposed to the spiraling staircase that goes around it (Shipley 2018, 13-16).

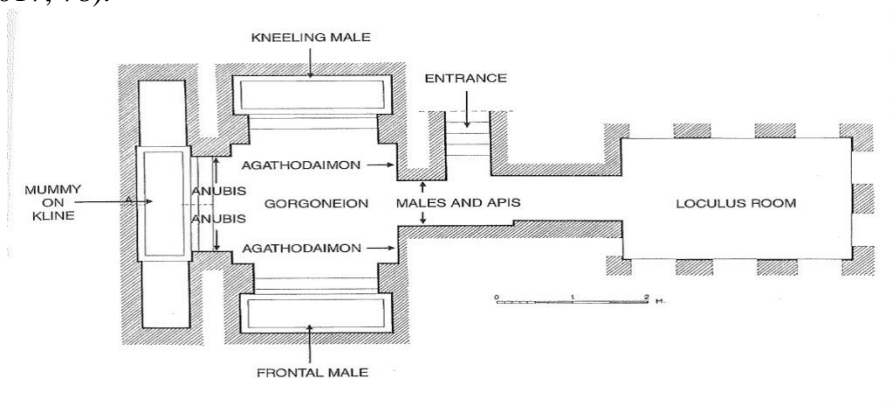
Persephone Tombs in the Hall of Caracalla, the Main Catacomb at Kom El-Shoqafa

The Persephone Tombs are located in the Hall of Caracalla within the Kom el-Shoqafa catacomb complex; it reveals a double use of styles in the principal *arcosolium* (Corbelli 2006, 20; Guimier-Sorbets et al. 1997, 355-410). It is now accessed by a tomb robbers' hall in the bedrock. Originally a small independent catacomb accessible by a staircase, it consists of a corridor with a large room of neatly cut loculi at its end and two short corridors parallel to one another containing rock-cut sarcophagi, which creates niches –an early form of *arcosolia*– that extend the *kline* niche into the Roman Period (Botti 1898, 347-367). The façades of the niches, with their triangularly shaped pediments supported by engaged piers, are conceived in Roman architectural style (Venit 2017, 63). All architectural features were plastered and originally had paintings (Empereur 1995, 20-22; Venit 2002a, 145-146).

The Tigrane Tomb

The Tigrane Tomb was once located in the eastern cemetery (Witt 2012, 11), but was reconstructed in the open court in the catacomb of Kom el-Shouqafa (Adriani 1956, 63-86; Picard 1965, 95-100). It is composed of two rooms (fig. 6), one room fitted with loculi and another in the form of a triclinium-shaped burial chamber, but only the burial chamber survives (Venit 1997, 701-729). The triclinium shape of the burial chamber is formed by the arrangement of three niches –in its case *arcosolia*– created by the sarcophagi carved from the living rock (fig. 7). The Tigrane burial room is covered by a shallow dome (Venit 1997, 701-729, 2017, 78). Architectonic work is present in the painted piers, which are decorated to represent stylized Roman columns, and in the

dome-shaped ceiling (fig. 8), which simulates a ribbed vault with an *oculus* (Venit 1997, 701-729, 2017, 78).



(Fig. 6): Plan of the Tigrane tomb (after Adriani, 1956, pl. I)



(Fig. 7): The central niche, Tigrane Pasha Street Tomb, Alexandria (after, Witt 2012, 11)

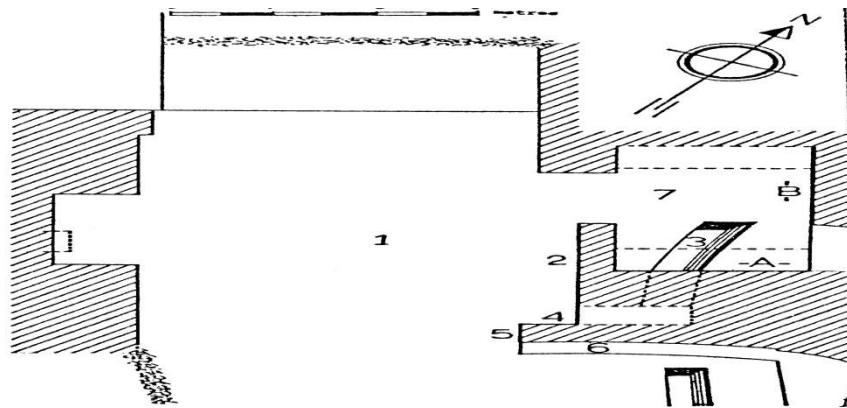


(Fig.8)The dome-shaped ceiling and architectonic pillars of Tigrane Tomb (after, Venit 2002a, 148).

The Wardian Tomb III (the so-called *Saqiya* Tomb):

The Saqiya tomb is located at the modern quarter of Wardian, part of Alexandria's western necropolis (Rodziewicz 1993, 281-290). It once consisted of a rectangular court, a kline room, and the remains of another room (fig. 9) (Venit 1988, 71-91). The burial chamber accommodates two klinai each set into an *arcosolium*. *Arcosolia* (articulated niches) characterize Roma-period tombs and the *Saqqia* tomb's *arcosolia* are among earliest painted on the back wall of the niche formed by the klinai are fictive

columns creating the impression of a third dimension (Riad 1964, 169-171; Venit 2017, 60-63).

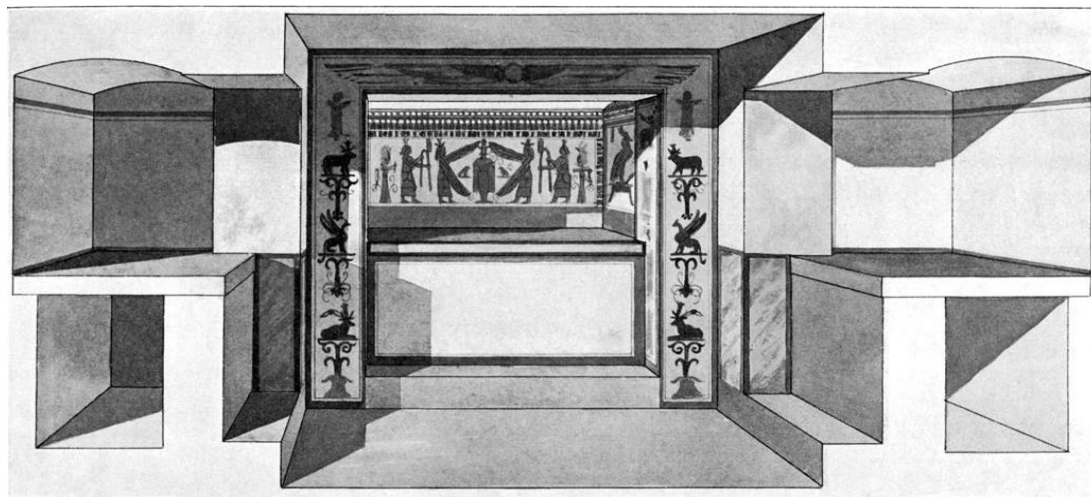


(Fig. 9) Plan of the *Saqiya* tomb (after, Venit 1988, 73)

The Sieglin Tomb

The Sieglin Tomb is located in the modern quarter of Gabbari (von Bissing 1901, 58-59). It consists of a burial chamber taking the shape of a *triclinium* with three undecorated sarcophagi set within niches as it appears in Fiechter's drawing (fig. 10) (Schmidt, 2021, 313-327; Venit 2002b, 124; Schreiber 1908, 7).

Hellenistic kline tombs in aediculated niches became, at the beginning of the imperial period, cist tombs in pilaster-framed niches; these could be arranged as three-tomb chambers. In the 2nd century the tombs were designed as garland sarcophagi surmounted by an arch. The Egyptianizing decor, which also becomes common in this period, suggests a precise knowledge of Egyptian concepts of the afterlife. However, the motifs were not chosen with a view to ›rebirth‹, but under the aspect of divine protection for the dead in the tomb (Schmidt, 2021, 312)



(Fig. 10): plan of Gabbari.Sieglin-tomb Alexandria, reconstruction by Ernst R. Fiechter (after, Schmidt, 2021, 314, fig.1)

The Stagni Tomb

The Stagni tomb was originally one of three hypogea, which were located in the area between Gabbari and Wardian. It is now reconstructed at the catacomb of Kom el-Shouqafa. The tomb's façade takes the form of a Greek naos with a triangular pediment.

Only the central niche with the *kline* survives (fig. 11) (Venit 1999, 641-699, 2002a, 159-165).



(Fig. 11): The Stagni Tomb, central niche with a kline (after venit, 1999, 646)

Habachi Tomb A

The Habachi tomb A consists of a U-shaped stairway, which gives access to a small passage descending to a small covered court that opens into several burial chambers. In the centre of the court there is a small altar of limestone blocks. The court gives access to three burial chambers. To the south-east there is a doorway leading to the main burial chamber, which is occupied by a rock-cut sarcophagus (looks like a kline chamber). The sarcophagus is cut from the living rock and is framed by two engaged pilasters, which are bare of decoration (Venit 2002a, 120-124). To the south-west side a doorway gives access to a second burial room, which has two rows of *loculi* (Adriani 1966, 159-160). The north-west side of the court has an entrance, which leads into a small rectangular vestibule (or anteroom) and to another a burial room with *loculi* (Habachi 1936, 270-285).

The North Coast Cemeteries:

The cemeteries of Plinthine, Taposiris Magna, Marina el-Alamein, Mersa Matruh and Zawiyet umm el-Rakham lie along the north coast ridge and reveal both similarities and variations of those of the capital. Rock-cut tombs and hypogea with *loculi*, open courts and peristyles exist at Plinthine and Mersa Matrouh, and at Plinthine walled areas enclose family tombs. Triclinium tombs also occur at Plinthine and Taposiris Magna; one such tomb is superimposed by a tower shaped as a scaled-down replica of the Pharos in Alexandria.

Marina el-Alamein

Marina el-Alamein, a small antique town situated around 100 km west of Alexandria, is a good example of a middle-sized settlement flourishing during the first three centuries AD. Marina el-Alamein belongs to the most unique archaeological sites situated in northern Egypt. In the 1st century AD, Marina el-Alamein was a peculiar settlement situated on the Egyptian Mediterranean coast for the wealthiest members of the urban community once living there (Bąkowska-Czerner et al. 2019, 19–39). It is a large necropolis with several types of monumental tombs, creating a border between the town Marina el-Alamein and the desert. The necropolis area was intentionally

separated from the town. It cannot be excluded that there was a main road between the tombs and the residential area, running towards Marsa Matruh (ancient Paraetionium) to the west and Alexandria to the east (Daszewski, 2011, 421–456).

Probably, the variety of styles of the tombs and graves reflects different social status of the inhabitants of the town. Reflection of their social status is clearly visible in the different types of tombs, which can also provide information about the origin of the populace living in this part of Egypt (Jakubiak, 2019, 59-72).

Several types of burial structures were concentrated there, ranging from simple graves without any superstructure parts, through trench tombs covered with flat slabs, the so-called ‘stepped pyramid tombs or box graves’, Others comprise simple trenches covered by rectangular prisms of sand and small stones contained within vertical limestone slabs, tempietto tombs, ‘mass graves’, to columbarium tombs (Jakubiak, 2019,59-72). Hypogea tombs exist, accessed by rock-cut *dromoi* leading to open courts with light-wells preceding the tomb *nucleii*. The burial chambers contain two large *klinai*, on which the deceased would have been placed side by side, and evidence exists for loculus burials (Zych et al., 2008, 83–100).

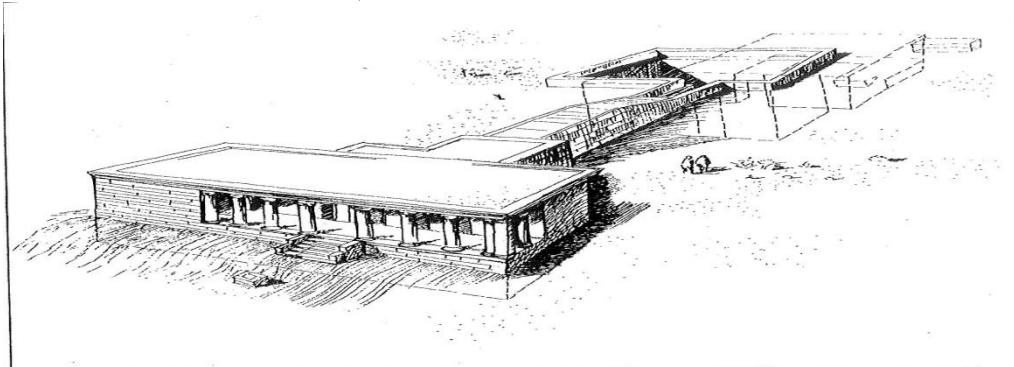
Some above-ground structures consist of stone-built, cube-shaped chambers with loculi. To the east and west of the central part of the necropolis, which doubtlessly is the most peculiar burial area in Marina el-Alamein, numerous tombs were also scattered across the site. Most of them belonged to the final stage of development of the necropolis. The necropolis development peak is manifested in a form of columbarium graves, some gates present stylized acanthus capital decoration (Bąkowska-Czerner et al. 2019,19–39), Sometimes these tombs were finished with burial chapels attached to the front of the *dromoi*, leading to the graves’ interiors. This kind of architectural and functional arrangement can be observed in tombs T63 and T214, but these tombs haven't been published yet. Larger pillar tombs occur (Jakubiak, 2019, 60-61; Daszewski, 2011, 69–92) (fig. 12), some superimposed by columns up to 7 meters high and topped with protruding entablatures, cornices, Nabataean-style capitals and sometimes a funerary sculpture of the deceased in reclining posture. Two hypogea have above-ground multi-chambered structures that may have served as pavilions in which the funerary ceremonies, banquets and ritual activities took place. Mummies found in one of the larger tombs indicate that the pavilions may also have been used for their display before internment in the chambers below, thus contributing to theories that mummies of the period were kept above ground (Jakubiak, 2019, 65-66).



(Fig.12): An overview of the necropolis of Marina El-Alamein (after, Jakubiak 2019, 61)

Marina Tomb 6:

The structure of Marina tomb 6 is a large broad building, entered on its long side (fig. 13). A very symmetrically arranged core is preceded by a portico with eight Ionic columns (Daszewski, 2011, 440–456; Daszewski, 1990, 15-51). The central section of the building beyond the portico is entirely devoted to a large banqueting room paved with rectangular slabs of limestone and fitted with two stone banqueting couches with their legs and horizontal beams indicated in reliefs. To the left and right of the banqueting room are two smaller rooms, presumably for service and, at the back of the banquet hall, a monumental doorway flanked by engaged semi-columns opens onto a short corridor that leads to a staircase down into the hypogeum (Venit, 2002a, 126; Medeksza, et al., 2010, 81–97).



(Fig.13) Reconstruction of the funerary chapel of Tomb 6 at Marina el-Alamein (after Venit, 2002a, 126)

Roman-period Tombs in the *Chora*:

The Tombs of Terenouthis (Kom Abou Bellou) in the Delta

The site of Kom Abou Bellou is the necropolis of the region of ancient Terenouthis (nowadays El Tarrana). It lies on the edge of the Western Desert on the road to Wadi al Natrun. It is about 4 km south of the Kafr Daoud station, at a distance about 70 km, northwest from Cairo. It is located in Beheira governorate. The modern town of al-Khatatba is a few kilometres south of the site, which is situated in the middle of a locality full of limestone quarries (Abd El-Ghaffar. W. M., et al., 2011, 4).

The cemetery at Kom Abu-Billou (ancient Terenouthis) has revealed mud-brick tombs consisting of no less than twenty-four types (Farid 1973, 21-26); the most popular being *mastaba*-shaped structures with vaults or truncated pyramidal-shaped roofs, coated in stucco and decorated in fresco technique (Hawwass 1979, 75-87). Niches in the eastern facades held the "Terenouthis" stelae, fronted by separate mud-brick offering tables (Abdel All 1983, 73-78; Kaplan 1999, 157-158). Few burials were found actually within the tombs, the human remains being interred around them, which lends to the theory that the tomb structures were family cenotaph or places for enactment of the ritual (Corbelli 2006, 21-22). Roman funerary contexts in the Nile Valley have suffered most, what remains indicates an eclectic mix of Greek, Roman and Egyptian styles and beliefs. Hundreds of simple pit tombs occur throughout. Other tombs there reveal remains of mudbrick tomb chapels with benches and niches from coffin emplacements (Corbelli 2006, 21-22).

Athribis: The Zodiac Tomb or the Tomb of the Two Brothers

Athribis, Greek: Ἀθριβίς, from the original Ancient Egyptian: *Hw.t-t3-ḥry-jb*, was an ancient city in Lower Egypt. It is located in present-day Tell Atrib, just northeast of Benha on the hill of Kom Sidi Yusuf. The town lies around 40 km north of Cairo, on

the eastern bank of the Damietta branch of the Nile. It was mainly occupied during the Ptolemaic, Roman, and Byzantine eras; Park, 2023, https://www.academia.edu/113432243/EARLIER_DATES_for_PETRIES_ZODIAC_TOMB_at_ATHRIBIS accessed 26/7/2024)

The tomb is in the cliffs above the temples of Athribis. It belongs to the brothers *Pamehyt* and *Ibpameny* the younger (Smith 2002, 240). The tomb is limited to one room with a burial niche at the north end of its west wall (Venit 2017, 152; Neugebauer et al. 1969, 96-98). It was dated to the mid-2nd century AD, and was celebrated due to the two zodiacs (denoted A and B) painted on the tomb's ceiling (<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/museums-static/digitalegypt/athribis/tomb.html>) accessed 26/7/2024).

Tuna el-Gebel (Thunis, Hermopolis West)

The necropolis of Tuna el-Gebel is the largest Graeco-Roman cemetery found so far in the Thebaid and the whole of Egypt. It started around 300 B.C. with single tombs along a processional way and ended in a city-like orthogonal structure. The earlier tombs of the Ptolemaic Period were built for priests of high rank, like that of Petosiris, then during the Roman period Tuna el-Gebel became the burial site of people from Hermopolis belonging to the upper and middle classes (Lembke, 2005).

There are different types of burials in Tuna el-Gebel. The most important one which is in this study is, tomb enclosures inside house, The so-called "the house-tomb" type, one-room or two-room tombs structure, built with mud bricks and burnt bricks for the elements such as doorways or stairways or staircases has accessible rooms, which is the most common type (Lembke 2014, 90-91, 83-92).

In Roman times, the burial customs were developed from hiding to presenting the mummy. The dead bodies- mummies- were either buried in or openly displayed on a construction of mud brick and wood decorated as a *kline*. These burial places were overarched by a shell or a baldachin (Lembke 2010, 245-250).

More wealthy burials incorporate tomb chapels having simple or double chambers, with *arcosolia* and architectonic paintwork. The best-preserved of this type can be seen in the cemetery of Tuna el-Gebel grouped around the tomb of Petosiris (Corbelli 2006, 26; Gabra 1971, 71-92), that, by the second century A.D. this tomb had become the focus for pilgrimages and around it a large cemetery of brick- and stone-built tomb chapels imitating contemporary housing had grown up serving the settlement of Hermopolis Magna. Many are undecorated but the exterior facades of some chapels imitate ashlar masonry incorporating Egyptian-style pilasters and illusionistic Greek-style false "windows". Interiors are painted in architectonic style but now with more elaborate panels (Corbelli 2006, p. 26-28).

The Tomb of Isidora:

The tomb is approached by a flight of steps; it consists of two successive chambers with a central door connecting the two rooms (Gabra et al. 1941, 67-72; Abdelwahed 2015, appendix 3). The doorway that leads to the second room is framed by pilasters with leafy capitals, the second of which serves as the burial chamber. The burial chamber contains a burial niche, which rises about a meter above the floor level of the room. The ceiling of the niche created by the projecting bed is conceived as a huge *Tridacna* shell, carved in relief and stuccoed white, similar to the ones that create the ceilings of the exedrae and hover over the entrance to the Main Tomb in the Great Catacomb at Kom el-Shoqafa, but the difference is that in the tomb of Isidora, set on high podiums painted to imitate porphyry – the rare, royal stone – spiral columns frame the front of the niche

(Venit 2017, 92; Thomas 1992, 319) (fig. 14). This exedra is the only semi-dome found in the chora (El Fakharani 1965, 57-62).



Figure 14: the Semidome of the Tomb of Isidora, Tuna El-Gebel
(<https://english.ahram.org.eg/News/388509.aspx>, Thursday 22 Oct 2020)

The Funerary Houses or Tombs in Tuna El-Gebel:

The funerary house-tombs are constructed of lightly stuccoed limestone or whitewashed mud-brick, and their facades show few Egyptian architectural elements. House-tombs are multi-room buildings; they normally contain two or three rooms, usually vaulted, on the main floor and often include a second story with a suite of rooms accessible by an exterior staircase as well. One of the rooms on the ground floor –the farther one of the two are aligned– is usually fitted with a niche on its back wall for a brick-built or wooden *kline* (Venit 2017, 90-91).

The Funerary House or Tomb No. 4: The House of the Dionysiac Krater

The House of the Dionysiac Krater is a large building than the others and seemingly far more opulent, it is arranged in an unusually elongated plan. In the first burial room an *arcosolium* constructed on the west wall holds a sumptuously appointed *kline*. The *kline* is articulated with plastically defined turned legs painted yellow to replicate wood, a colored and painted mattress cover, and a "bier-cloth" painted red with yellow lines to simulate brick. To either side, at the front plane of the *kline*, white columns with red netting were poised to support the front of the *arcosolium* (Venit, 2017, 95), so we can notice that most of the architectural elements are painted and not built.

The Funerary House or Tomb No. 3: Tomb of the Abduction of Persephone

The Tomb of Persephone consists of two-rooms, both of which bore decoration. The first room is architecturally embellished with painted *orthostats* topped by a red and black band. The second chamber, as also frequently seen at Tuna el-Gebel, focuses on a funerary niche. The niche (fig. 15) holds a brick-built *kline*. Simple legs are inscribed on a structure otherwise painted to appear as if built from brick with dark lines to define the mortar, at once elaborating upon itself and other brick-built banquettes at Tuna el-Gebel in an extraordinary postmodern fashion (Gabra 1939, 483-496). The *kline* niche is flanked by two columns painted to simulate green, variegated marble that support a vaulted roof (Venit 2017, 96-97).



Figure 15: The niche of the Tomb of the Abduction of Persephone, Tuna El-Gebel (after, Lembke, 2014, Pl. 7)

The Funerary House or Tomb No. 16: The Tomb of Oedipus

The Tomb of Oedipus is a two-story mortuary building. The name of the tomb is derived from a painting that shows episodes of the myth of Oedipus with the sphinx at the gates of Thebes. The fresco is now kept in the Egyptian museum in Cairo.

The Funerary House or Tomb No. 18:

The funerary house or tomb no. 18 is a small three-room tomb, it assumes the more usual plan for Tuna el-Gebel tombs. The entrance to the tomb is located on the north; it gives access to a huge rectangular room with three *loculi* (Gabra et al. 1941, 39-50). This room leads into two adjacent chambers located on the south. It is suggested to be familial burial because of the number of *loculi* in it (Badawy 1958, 117-122; Kaplan, 1999, 159- 160).

The Funerary House or Tomb No. 20:

It is a two-story tomb with four rooms; two on the lower floor and two on the upper with an exterior staircase (Gabra et al. 1941, 39-50). There is a niche to the right of the door of the entrance. On the upper floor at the rear room, a funerary niche is fitted with a bed or sarcophagus (Venit 2017, 111-113; Kaplan 1999, 160-162).

The Funerary House or Tomb No. 21:

The tomb faces the north to a narrow street on which the houses had exterior staircases (fig. 16), which it too may have had, though it bears no indication of an upper story (Kessler 1981, 109-119; Lembke, K., et al., 2011, 55-63). Extant are four vaulted rooms: an anteroom and a burial room are on axis with one another, and two side chambers open from the anteroom (Riggs 2005, 130) (fig. 17). The façade of the tomb admits both Greek and Egyptian architectural elements. The entrance door is surmounted by a Greek pediment and framed by two piers, but beneath the Greek pediment is an Egyptian molding (Gabra 1971, 93-99; Riggs 2005, 131) (fig. 18). Beyond the south doorway, the second chamber contains the burial shaft, which terminates in two small rooms (Badawy 1958, 117-122; Castiglione 1961, 209-230; Venit 2017, 114-115).



Figure 16: Street with the outer staircases of House tombs at Tuna El-Gebel (after Riggs 2005, 130)

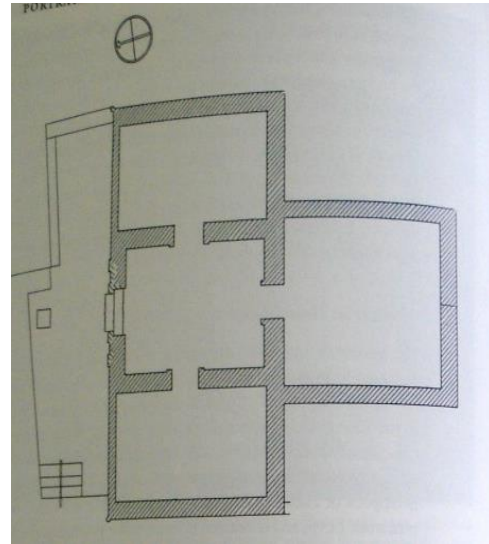


Figure 17: The Plan of House Tomb 21 , in the rear chamber, which is vaulted, a shaft in the floor led to subterranean burials (after Riggs, 2005, 130)



Figure 18: the facade of House Tomb 21 , Tuna El-Gebel combines the Egyptian cavetto cornice and a triangular Greek pediment (after Riggs, 2005,131)

Tombs at Antaioupolis (Qaw el-Kebir)

Qaw el-Kebir, Tjebu or Djew-Qa, was an ancient Egyptian city located on the east bank of the Nile, midway between the towns of Akhmim and Asyut, in what is now Sohag Governorate, is the necropolis and town-site of ancient Tjebu, a town, once capital of the 12th Upper Egyptian Nome. In Greek and Roman Egypt, its name was Antaeopolis after its tutelary deity, the war god known by the Hellenized name Antaeus. Its modern name is Qaw El Kebir (<https://egyptsites.wordpress.com/2009/02/12/qaw-el-kebir/>; <https://www.meretsegerbooks.com/gallery/322/qaw-el-kebir>, accessed 26/7/2024).

Extensive Roman cemeteries have been excavated at Qaw el-Kebir, revealing burials beneath small, square brick-built structures with interior niches (Kaplan 1999, 179). The tombs at Qaw el-Kebir are divided into three types: cremation pits; shaft tombs, which consist of a shaft with steps leading into a rock-cut burial room; and funerary chapels, which are often oriented north-south and consist of two or more square or rectangular rooms (Steckeweh 1936, 56-58). The room that leads into the burial chamber often has two pillars forming three entrances to the cult room, which has a burial niche in the west wall (L'Hôte, 1840, 84-85).

Akhmim (Panopolis) at El-Salamuni:

Akhmim (ancient Panopolis) is located on the east bank of the Nile, about 200 km north of Luxor. El-Salamuni mountain is the main necropolis of Akhmim during the Graeco-Roman period (Van Rengen 2013, 5028-5030), at the foot of the mountain is found the burial area, rock-cut tombs, el-Salamuni, Cemetery C, (or type C), which mainly from the Roman period, The tombs are situated on the southwest-orientated mountain-slope (Bagnall et al. 2004).

The “facade-type” tombs at El-Salamuni (Type C-3), which date from the first to third centuries AD, are rock-cut tombs cut out horizontally into the mountain rock; the tombs have a low entrance facade sticking out the mountain-slope and give access to a single room. In some cases, however, complexes contain up to five rooms: an anteroom and one or more burial chambers on the same axis of the entrance, with burial niches (Geens, 2007a, 15- 41, 2007b, 80; Foley 2005, 664) (fig. 19). It has larger hypogea with niches for emplacement of the deceased (Kuhlmann 1983, 78, Corbelli 2006, 23-24). The niches have shallow mummy-form "anthropoid" trenches to bury the deceased (Hafez 2020, 100).

There is a mass grave from the Roman period, consisting of a single room with benches along the side walls. As the benches are too small to put down any mummies on them, they probably were meant for visitors in case of new burials. The mummies are laid on the floor along the narrow sides of the burial chamber (Clarysse et al. 2014).

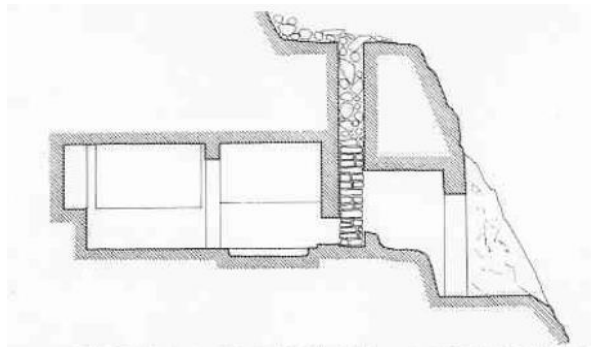


Figure 19: Plan of Salamuni tomb type C3 (after Kuhlmann 1983, P.78.)

Von Bissing’s Tomb 1913:

The tomb has 3 rooms: an antechamber, a room with a kline niche (von Bissing 1946/47, 7-16, 1950, 560-566), and a burial room cut with two niches (Venit 2017, 183; Kuhlmann 1983, 73).

Von Bissing’s Tomb 1897:

The plan of the tomb indicates two rooms, one behind the other but off-axis to one another. The farther room is larger than the first, cut with a niche in the back wall and each of the side walls, it served as the burial chamber (von Bissing 1946/47, 2-6, 1950, 547-576). The tomb is oriented roughly west to east, with its entrance on its west wall (Venit 2017, 185-86, Kaplan 1999, 169-170).

The Dakhla Oasis: Qaret el-Muzawaqa

During the Roman period, military outposts protecting the trade routes of the Western Desert led to expansion of the settlements in the Oases. A variety of types of burial can

be found, ranging from rectangular rock-cut pits to larger chamber tombs cut in rocky outcrops and in the desert cliffs, as in Siwa, tombs accessed by rock-cut staircases leading to chambers with superimposed rows of loculi, monumental stone-built *mastaba*-type structures, as in Dakhleh. In the Dakhleh Oasis, the remains of six stone-built, *mastaba*-shaped monumental tombs about 7.5 meters square (late first century BC/ early first century AD) are situated in the village of Bashendi. The best preserved tombs are Tomb No. 1, the tomb of Kitynos, which has a flat roof and Egyptian relief decoration, and Tomb 4, which has a domed roof and decorative pilasters with stylized classical bases and capitals, all preserved inside the later Ottoman tomb of Sheikh Bashendi. They are evidence of the wealth and significance of this settlement in Roman times (Corbelli 2006, 29-31).

The Tomb of Petubastis:

The Tomb of Petubastis is a single room tomb, the entrance to the tomb, cut into its south wall (Winlock 1936, 35-36; Riggs 2005, 161; Whitehouse 1998, 262-263). A shallow long niche that leaves a shelf for the disposition of the dead is cut into the middle of both the east and west walls (Osing et al. 1982, 70-81; Venit 2017, 158) (fig. 20).

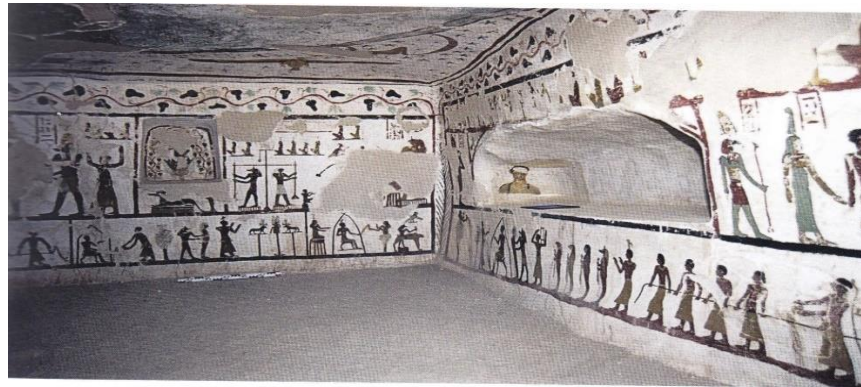


Figure 20: Shallow long niche, the tomb of Petubastis, Dakhla oases (after,Venit 2017, pl. XXV)

The Tomb of Petosiris:

The tomb of Petosiris is more complex than that of Petubastis. The tomb opens through its south wall, it is composed of two small rooms, with a short passage in between, the second chamber, which is cut at angle to the first, is accessed from a doorway in the middle of the east wall of Room I, (Kaplan, 1999, 182-185; Osing et al 1982, 81-94) (fig.21). Both chambers were used as burial rooms, since each is cut with long neat niches that form benches for the laying out of the dead (Whitehouse 1998, 252-270). One niche is centered on the north (back) wall of Room I, two more are cut in Room II, these niches differ from those cut in the tomb of Petubastis, they are quadrilateral in section and higher, and though only slightly deeper, they seem to form a bed for the deceased rather than a shelf (Riggs, 2005, 63; Venit 2017, 165).

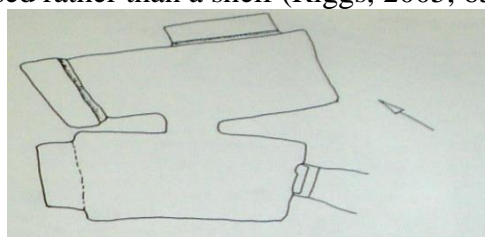


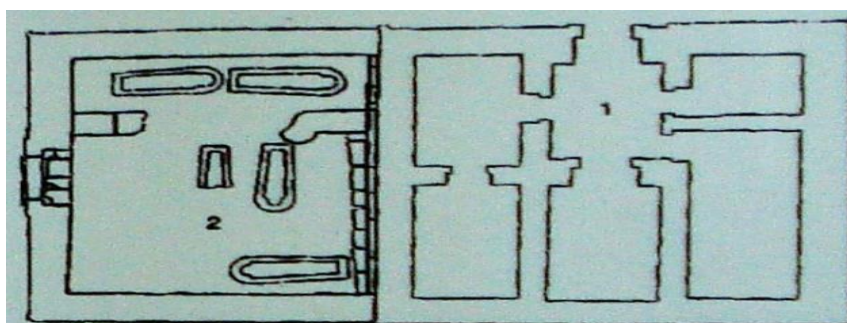
Figure 21: plan of Tomb of Petosiris, Dakhla Oasis (after Riggs, 2005, p.161)

Ezbet Bashendi:

The Roman necropolis lies at the northern edge of the modern village of Ezbet Bashendi in the Dakhla Oasis, which consists, as far as it has been cleared, of six stone-built (Yamani 2001, 393-414), *mastaba*-shaped monumental tombs about 7.5 meters square (late first century B.C./early first century A.D.). The best preserved are Tomb 1, the tomb of Kitynos, which has a flat roof and Egyptian relief decoration, and Tomb 4, which has a domed roof and decorative pilasters with stylized classical bases and capitals, all preserved inside the later ottoman tomb of Sheikh Bashendi (Corbelli 2006, 29-31). The owners of such monumental tombs must have been wealthy people and such a necropolis points to Ezbet Bashendi as a significant settlement in the Roman Period. The tombs of Ezbet Bashendi are further evidence of the expansion of Graeco-Roman architectural patterns in Egypt during Roman Period and show a rather high technical standard (Osing et al. 1982, 58-69).

Tomb No. 1 (Tomb of Kitynos) in Ezbet Bashendi

The plan is that of a small mortuary temple (fig. 22). The entrance is located on the east, where it consists of an antechamber opening into the funerary chapel and into four secondary rooms on both north and south sides. The architecture and the decoration are in ancient Egyptian style (Yamani 2001, 396).



(Figure 22: Plan of the tomb of Kitynos, Ezbet Bashendi (after, Yamani 2001, 399))

Tombs No. 4 in Ezbet Bashendi:

It consists of a partly destroyed forecourt, which opens into a funerary chapel (fig. 23). The tomb is now occupied by the mausoleum of Sheikh Bashendi, where an Ottoman mud-brick dome was built upon the originally domed Roman funerary chapel. Engaged pilasters are set within the walls; they show attic bases and capitals (Osing et al 1982, 57-58). The main architectural feature of the tomb is the wide recess in the middle of the south wall, which is covered by an apse, 2.73 m high. This recess is flanked by engaged columns with capitals, whose shape cannot be exactly defined. To the east and west of the recess are two small niches, with a similar design (Yamani, 2001, 395-397).

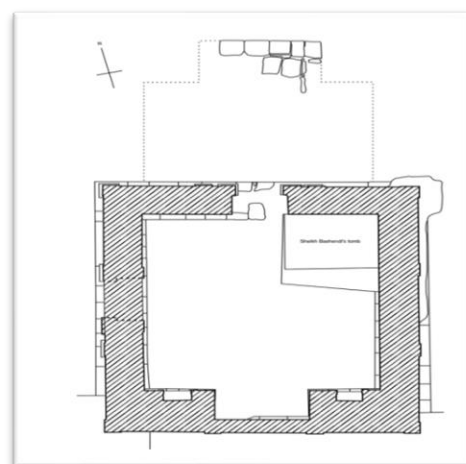


Figure 23: Plan of Tomb No. 4, Ezbet Bashendi (after Yamani, 2001, 401)

Table (1): Comparison between the tombs in the Various Regions

Region	Tomb	Date	Design	Staircase	Triclinium	Loculi	Niches/ <i>klinai</i>	Decoration (architectural)
Alexandria	Catacomb of Kom El-Shoqafa	Second half of the first century AD	Vertical plan with hypogea, a "rotunda", and a vestibule with a double <i>exedrae</i> (benches within <i>arcosolia</i>) in the form of cockle-shells; each covered by a shell-shaped half-dome And Greek temple style of the main tomb	Deep spiral stairway	Exists	Exists	Exists with rock-cut sarcophagi	both Greek and Egyptian style Columns with Egyptian style. Shell shaped semi-dome
	Persephone Tombs	Late first or early second century AD	Hypogea Corridors with a room	Exists	Exists	Exists	Exists with <i>arcosolia</i> , the facades with triangular pediments supported by engaged piers	Architectural elements were plastered
	The Tigrane Tomb	Hadrian Early second	Burial chamber with klinai covered by a shallow dome	Absent	Exists	absent	Exists with <i>arcosolia</i> and rock-cut sarcophagi	Architectonic painted piers, decorated to represent

		century AD						stylized Roman columns
	The Wardian Tomb III (the Saqiya Tomb)	1 st century AD	A court and a <i>kline</i> room	Absent			two klinai each set into an <i>arcosolium</i>	Arcosolia, fictive columns creating a 3D impression
	The Sieglin Tomb	Late 1 st early 2 nd century AD	burial chamber taking the shape of a <i>triclinium</i> with three sarcophagi	Absent	Exists	Exists	exists	Central niche and Undecorated sarcophagi
	The Stagni Tomb	1 st century AD	Only the central niche which survives	Absent	Absent		exists	The tomb's façade takes the form of a Greek naos with a triangular pediment
	Habachi Tomb A	1 st century AD	A stairway leads to a court and several burial chambers	U-shaped stairway descending	Absent	Exists	Klinai with rock-cut sarcophagi framed by two engaged pilasters	
The North coast	Tombs of Plinthine and Marsa Matrouh	1 st -3 rd centuries AD	Rock-cut tombs with hypogea and superimpose above ground structures, pavilions and dromoi	Exists	Exists	Exists		

	Marina Tomb 6	1 st -3 rd centuries AD	A portico, a banquet hall, and a staircase down to hypogeum	Exists	Absent, a banquet hall instead			Semi-columns flanking the door leading to the stairs
The Delta	The Tombs of Terenuthis (Kom Abou Bellou)	3 rd -4 th century AD	Mastaba served as an altar, and a burial chamber	Absent	Absent		Exists	
Athribis	The Zodiac Tomb of the Two Brothers	late 2 nd century	One room	Absent	Absent	Absent	Exists	Zodiacs on the ceiling
Tuna el Gebel	The Tomb of Isidora	Hadrian/Antonius pious	Two rooms (antechamber and a burial chamber)	Exists upwards	Absent	Absent	Exists	Two pilaster columns flank the doorway leading to the burial room <i>Tridacina</i> shell covers the burial niche, with spiral columns flank the niche
	The House Tomb 4, of the Dionysiac Krater	1 st to 3 rd century AD	House tomb with elongated plan of two burial rooms	absent	absent	Absent	Kline exists with arcosolium	The architectural elements like the columns are pilastered and painted not built

	Tomb of the Abduction of Persephone	End of the 1 st century AD	Two rooms	absent	absent	Absent	Kline niche with arcosolia	two columns flank the funerary niche and a vaulted roof)
	House Tomb No. 16: Orestes and Oedipus	2 nd century AD	Two story mortuary building	Exists	absent	Absent	Absent	Scene of Greek narrative
	House Tomb No. 18	1 st century AD	Three rooms	absent	absent	Exists	absent	
	House Tomb No. 20	1 st century AD	Two story (four rooms)	Exterior staircase	absent	Absent	Exists with a sarcophagus	
	House Tomb No. 21	1 st century AD	Four rooms and a burial shaft with two small rooms under the ground	Exterior staircase	absent	Absent	Absent, but there is a burial shaft, terminates in two small rooms	The entrance is surrounded by Greek pediments
Sohag	Tombs at Qaw el kebir	1 st -2 nd century	Burial rooms and funerary chapels	Exists descending		Absent		Pillars flanking the cult room
Akhmim El Salamuni	Von Bissing's Tomb 1913	1 st – 3 rd AD	3 rooms, cut horizontally in the cliff of the mountain	Absent	Absent	Absent	Exists	
	Von Bissing's Tomb 1897	2 nd century AD	2 rooms, cut horizontally in the cliff of the mountain	Absent	absent	Absent	Exists	
The Dakhla Oasis	The Tomb of Petubastis	1 st century AD	One room cut in the rock	Absent	absent	Absent	Shallow long niche into the side walls as a shelf	

	Tomb of Petosiris	1 st century AD	Two rooms cut into the rock	Absent	absent	Absent	Niches exist but in a quadrilateral bed form	
	Tomb 1, of Kitynos in Ezbet Bashendi	1 st -2 nd century AD	Small mortuary Egyptian temple	Absent	absent	Absent	absent	Egyptian style architectural elements
	Tombs No. 4 in Ezbet Bashendi	1 st -2 nd century AD	Domed Roman funerary chapel	Absent	absent		Small niches exist	Engaged pilasters, with attic bases and capitals

Discussions

Unique features in Roman Egyptian tombs highlight the diverse and elaborate funerary customs and architectural innovations present in the various regions. Tombs of Alexandria during the Roman period varied from those in the *chora* in terms of planning, structure, and style of decoration and other architectural elements, like columns, pediments, etc. The tombs discussed in this study date from the 1st century AD to the 3rd century AD. From the previously mentioned data and the comparing table above, the following points can be inferred:

The Design

The types of Tombs in Roman Egypt can be divided into Hypogea rock cut tombs like tombs of Alexandria, and above-ground with hypogea like tombs in the North coast, Tuna el Gebel, and Rock-Cut Tombs in the mountains like in Akhmim and the Dakhla oasis.

Alexandria

As the capital of Egypt during the Roman period, featured elaborate architectural styles in its tombs, such as Kom el Shoqafa. The catacomb at Kom el-Shoqafa is the best-known tomb complex in Alexandria. It has a vertical planning axis rather than a horizontal one. It consists of two hypogea: the main hypogeum and the Hall of Caracalla. The architectural elements are composed of both Greek and Egyptian ones: a deep spiral stairway, a "rotunda", and a vestibule with a double *exedrae* (benches within *arcosolia*) in the form of cockle-shells; each covered by a shell-shaped half-dome, which is an Alexandrian innovation and also exists on the façade of the main tomb of the catacomb's entrance.

The North Coast

In Marina Tomb 6, North coast, the above-ground structure, a very symmetrically arranged core, is preceded by a portico with eight Ionic columns. There is a banquet hall. The hypogeum: at the back of the banquet hall, a monumental doorway flanked by engaged semi-columns, leads to a staircase down into the hypogeum. In the North Coast, the cemeteries which lie along the north coast ridge reveal both similarities and variations of those of the capital. Rock-cut tombs and hypogea with *loculi*, open courts and peristyles exist at Plinthine and Mersa Matrouh. Triclinium tombs also occur at Plinthine and Taposiris Magna; one such tomb is superimposed by a tower shaped as a scaled-down replica of the Pharos in Alexandria. The variety of styles of the tombs and graves reflects different social status of the inhabitants of the town. The different types of tombs for burials included superstructure tombs (above ground tombs), the so-called 'stepped pyramid tombs or box graves', simple graves without any over ground parts, through trench tombs covered with flat slabs, and simple trenches covered by rectangular prisms of sand and small stones contained within vertical limestone slabs, tempietto tombs, 'mass graves', to columbarium tombs.

The Chora

In the Delta, the tombs of Terenuthis (Kom Abou Bellou) are mud-brick tombs, the most popular of which were the *mastaba*-shaped structures with vaults or truncated pyramidal-shaped roofs, coated in stucco and decorated in fresco technique. The tombs at Antaioupolis (Qaw el-Kebir) are divided into three types: cremation pits; shaft tombs,

which consist of a shaft with steps leading into a rock-cut burial room; and funerary chapels.

The funerary house-tombs in Tuna el Gebel are constructed of lightly stuccoed limestone or whitewashed mud-brick. House-tombs are multi-room buildings, built with mud bricks and burnt bricks; A large cemetery of brick- and stone-built tomb chapels imitating contemporary housing had grown up serving the settlement of Hermopolis Magna, normally contain two or three rooms, usually vaulted, on the main floor and often include a second story with a suite of rooms.

In Akhmim, the facade-type C-3 tombs at El-Salamuni are rock-cut tombs, cut out horizontally into the mountain rock, at the foot of the mountain, have a low entrance facade sticking out the mountain-slope and giving access to a single room. In some cases, however, complexes contain up to five rooms: an ante-room and one or more burial chambers on the same axis of the entrance.

in the Dakhla Oasis, the types of burials in Ezbet Bashendi range from rectangular rock-cut pits to larger chamber tombs cut in rocky outcrops and in the desert cliffs chambers with superimposed rows of *loculi*, monumental stone-built *mastaba*-type structures. The Tomb of Petubastis (Qaret el-Muzawaqa) is a single room tomb, while the Tomb of Petosiris has two chambers were used as burial rooms. The Roman necropolis lies at the northern edge of the modern village of Ezbet Bashendi in the Dakhla Oasis; it consists stone-built (*mastaba*-shaped monumental tombs). The best preserved are Tomb 1, the tomb of Kitynos, which has a flat roof and Egyptian relief decoration. The plan is that of a small mortuary temple. Architecture as well as decoration is in ancient Egyptian style. Tomb 4, which has a domed Roman funerary chapel, a domed roof and decorative pilasters with stylized classical bases and capitals, all preserved inside the later Ottoman tomb of Sheikh Bashendi.

The Main Architectural Elements

The Staircase

In Alexandria, the tomb of Kom El Shoqafa has a deep spiral staircase leads to the interior of the tomb and hypogea, the same is for the tombs of Persephone hall of Caracalla. In Habbachi tomb, the tomb is accessed by a U-shaped stairway descending. The north coast tombs also have stairs down to the hypogea. In Tuna El Gebel, Funerary Houses, also called house tombs such as tomb No. 16, 20, and 21 have exterior staircases, as they usually composed of two stories. The tomb of Isidora is approached by a flight of steps; it consists of two successive chambers with a central door connecting the two rooms.

The Triclinium

Alexandria

Some architectural features were related to Roman customs like *loculi*, *triclinium* and niches. The standard form of the burial chambers in the Roman-period tombs of Alexandria is the *triclinium* with three sarcophagi positioned at right angles. For the Roman funerary customs, funerary and memorial feasts took place at the tomb during the year commemorated the dead and heroized him or her to memorialize the banquet of the dead in architectural form, to meet the needs of the Alexandrian Roman inhabitants, for their funerary habits to commemorate the dead, and memorial repasts. The burial chamber of the main tomb in Kom El Shoqafa takes the form of a *triclinium* (a Roman form), where it takes with three niches that contain rock-cut sarcophagi.

IntThe Tigrane Tomb, the burial chamber that survives, takes the form of a triclinium-shaped burial chamber. The Sieglin Tomb, the burial chamber takes the shape of a *triclinium* with three undecorated sarcophagi set within niches. Marina tomb 6, on the north coast, west of Alexandria, is a large banqueting room paved with rectangular slabs of limestone and fitted with two stone banqueting couches with their legs and horizontal beams indicated in reliefs.

The cutting of *triclinium*-shaped burial rooms in Roman-period tombs of Alexandria demonstrates the importance of the funerary and memorial feasts especially for the Roman citizens of Alexandria.

In Marina Tomb 6 in the north coast a banquet hall is existing instead of the triclinium burial rooms also pavilions and funerary chapels are found in the north coast which serve as the triclinium function.

The Dromoi

Dromoi were of the unique features of the tombs in the region north coast. Sometimes these tombs were finished with burial chapels attached to the front of the *dromoi*, leading to the graves' interiors, like in tombs T63 and T214. Larger pillar tombs occur, some superimposed by columns up to 7 meters high and topped with protruding entablatures, cornices, Nabataean-style capitals. Hypogea exist, but they were accessed by rock-cut dromoi leading to open courts with light-wells preceding the tomb *nucleii*.

The loculi, klinai and arcosolia

In Alexandria loculi were very common in the Roman period tombs as it is related to the roman customs. The main tomb of Kom el Shoqafa and its surrounding corridors, contain a series of rows of rock-cut *loculi* and niches for sarcophagus burials. In Marina el-Alamein, some above-ground structures consist of stone-built, cube-shaped chambers with *loculi*. The burial chambers contain two large *klinai*, on which the deceased would have been placed side by side, and evidence exists for *loculus* burials.

The *arcosolia* (articulated niches) characterize Roman period tombs. The *Saqqia* tomb's *arcosolia* are among earliest painted on the back wall of the niche formed by the *klinai*. In Alexandria, there were sarcophagi in the niches, the situation is different in the chora, that there were niches with *arcosolia*, and in other cases there were shelves for the laying the mummy on it. In the main tomb of Kom El –Shoqafa, the niches with arced ceilings are cut into its walls to create its crucial form, and a rock-cut sarcophagus is set into each of the niches. Habachi Tomb A, the main burial chamber, which is occupied by a rock-cut sarcophagus (looks like a *kline* chamber). The sarcophagus is cut from the living rock and is framed by two engaged pilasters, the other burial rooms have *loculi*.

In the Tigrane Tomb, the triclinium shape of the burial chamber is formed by the arrangement of three niches –in its case *arcosolia*– created by the sarcophagi carved from the living rock. In the *Saqiya* Tomb, the burial chamber accommodates two *klinai* each set into an *arcosolium*; they are fictive columns creating the impression of a third dimension. The Persephone tombs in the Hall of Caracalla reveal a double use of styles in the principal *arcosolium*. It consists of a corridor with a large room of neatly cut *loculi* at its end and two short corridors parallel to one another containing rock-cut sarcophagi, which creates niches –an early form of *arcosolia*– that extend the *kline* niche into the Roman Period.

In Roman-period Tuna el Gebel, the burial customs were developed from hiding to presenting the mummy. The dead bodies- mummies- were either buried in or openly displayed on a construction of mud brick and wood decorated as a *kline*. More wealthy burials incorporate tomb chapels having simple or double chambers, with *arcosolia* and *architectonic* paintwork. Most of the architectural elements of the Funerary House or Tomb

No. 4: The House of the Dionysiac Krater are painted to imitate stone. In the first burial room an *arcosolium* constructed on the west wall holds a sumptuously appointed *kline*. Tomb of Abduction of Persephone focuses on a funerary niche, that holds a brick-built *kline*. The house Tomb No. 21, the second chamber does not have a *kline* niche, it contains the burial shaft, which terminates in two small rooms.

The tombs of Akhmim (Panopolis) at El-Salamuni have *kline*. It has larger hypogea with niches for emplacement of the deceased. The niches have shallow mummy-form "anthropoid" trenches to bury the deceased. Von Bissing's Tomb 1913 has 3 rooms: an antechamber, a room with a *kline* niche, and a burial room cut with two niches. The burial chamber of Von Bissing's Tomb 1897 is cut with a niche in the back wall and each of the side walls.

The Tomb of Petubastis in the Dakhla Oasis (Qaret el-Muzawaqa), A shallow long niche that leaves a shelf for the disposition of the dead is cut into the middle of both the side walls. The Tomb of Petosiris the two chambers since each is cut with long neat niches that form benches for the laying out of the dead. These niches differ from those cut in the tomb of Petubastis, they are quadrilateral in section and higher, and though only slightly deeper, they seem to form a bed for the deceased rather than a shelf.

The Architectural Decoration

In kom el Shoqafa, the main tomb assumes the plan of a Greek temple, but the decoration is Egyptian, it consists of an antechamber and a burial chamber with a pronaos in between. The pronaos is introduced by two columns set between antae, which take the form of engaged pilasters carved with papyriform bases and capitals in Egyptian composite form with acanthus and lotus buds, which characterize Egyptian architecture. The reliefs carved on the architrave, showing a central winged sun-disc flanked by a Horus-falcon to either side, upon which a frieze of *uraei* surmounts. The architrave is capped by a row of Greek dentils. The façade is finished off with an Egyptian segmental pediment with a disc centered in its tympanum.

In the Persephone Tombs in the hall of Caracalla, the façades of the niches, with their triangularly shaped pediments supported by engaged piers, are conceived in Roman architectural style. All architectural features were plastered. In the Tigrane Tomb, architectonic work is present in the painted piers, which are decorated to represent stylized Roman columns, and in the dome-shaped ceiling. A shallow dome covers the Tigrane burial room. The Stagni tomb's façade takes the form of a Greek naos with a triangular pediment.

In Tuna el Gebel, many tombs are left undecorated, but the exterior facades of some chapels imitate ashlar masonry incorporating Egyptianising pilasters and illusionistic Greek-style false "windows". Interiors are painted in *architectonic* style but now with more elaborate panels. In the tomb of Isidora, the doorway that leads to the second room is framed by pilasters with leafy capitals. The burial chamber contains a burial niche. The ceiling of the niche created by the projecting bed is conceived as a huge Tridacna shell, carved in relief and stuccoed white, in the tomb of Isidora, the shell is set on high podiums painted to imitate porphyry – the rare, royal stone – spiral columns frame the front of the niche, This exedra is the only semi-dome found in the chora and the other Tridacina shell is existing in the Tomb of Kom El Shoqafa in the vestibule and on the façade of the burial chamber.

Conclusion

The study focused on regional variations of Egypt Roman-period tombs in terms of architectural planning, orientation, style of architectural elements. The selected regions

covered Alexandria, the North Coast, the Delta (Kom about Billou and Athribis), and several burials in the Chora, including Tuna el Gebel, Akhmim, and the Dakhla oasis (Qaret el Muzawaqa and Ezebet Bashendi). Tomb types in Roman Egypt varied from one region to the other, depending on the topographical and geographical nature of the site, the economic and social status of its patrons, and the factors of time and urban extension. The types of tombs in Roman Egypt varied in planning, architectural structure, and representational style. Some tombs included hypogea like those built or carved in Alexandria; others were rock cut tombs or hypogea like the tombs in the North coast. Other tombs in the chora were cut in the mountains like those in Akhmim and the Dakhla oasis, while other burials were completely built like the funerary houses/ tombs of Tuna el Gebel.

Each region has different funerary architectural style or burial design. While the design of the tombs in some regions are complex, other regions adopted very simple design to match the financial capability of the tomb owner to afford the geological and topographical nature of the region. While the *loculi* were very common in Alexandria and the North Coast, *klinai* and niches with *arcosolia* were favored in most of the regions. Some architectural features like the *loculi*, the *triclinium*, and the side niches were closely related to Roman customs. Architectonic work instead of sculpture was widely spread in the *chora*, especially in Tuna El Gebel. The *dromoi* were also a unique feature of the tombs in the North Coast. The burials also have above-ground multi-chambered structures. In Alexandria, the triclinium-shaped burial chambers with sarcophagi at the right angles were essential, but in the *chora*, the built or carved niches with *arcosolia* were preferred. In the rock-cut tombs of El-Salamuni at Akhmim, the niches were set in shallow mummy-form "anthropoid" trenches to serve as the burial of the deceased. The tomb of Petubastis in the Dakhla Oasis has a shallow long niche with a shelf for the laying out of the dead, while the tomb of Petosiris is cut with long neat niches that form benches for the burial of the dead, but they are quadrilateral in section and higher, they seem to form a bed for the deceased rather than a shelf.

In short, the architectural and representational variations of Roman-period tombs indicate that such burials were built by and for people of high and middle social status. The funerary architectural layout and decoration suited the economic status of the patrons and the geomorphological state of the burial site. The tomb patrons were keen to represent the cultural diversity inherent in Roman Egypt for Egyptian, Greek, and Roman architectural features and eschatological beliefs are embedded in their tombs.

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