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The Depiction of Tomb Patrons in the Tombs of Roman Egypt

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Abstract

This article explores the depiction of tomb patrons in the burials of Roman Egypt, highlighting the fusion of Classical and Egyptian elements in funerary decoration. It focuses on regional variations in the depiction of the tomb patrons in Roman period, shedding the light on the differences between Alexandria and the chora in terms of style, dress, and initiation into the cult. It can be said that each region has its unique style of representation for the tomb patron. Previous and current studies have concentrated on the decoration of the tombs of Alexandria and the temples. There is no comprehensive study on the issue of regional variations in the depiction of the tomb patron in Roman Egypt. It aims at filling in this research gap. It uses a descriptive, analytical and comparative methodology of archaeological evidence, scenes of tomb patrons' in tombs dating back to Roman Period, from tombs of Alexandria and the chora, in certain regions (Tuna El Gebel, Akhmim, and Dakhla Oasis), focusing on the integration of Greek cultural symbols while maintaining their traditional Egyptian essential characteristics, to explore the depiction of tomb patrons, their attire, and their association with cults like the cult of Isis, and how the regions affected their style of depiction. Inhabitants of Roman Egypt were careful enough to cope with the trend of portraying the dead in a new style (Graeco-Roman), but they took hold on traditional Egyptian religious beliefs, yet sometimes Greeks and Romans and traditional Egyptian styles and beliefs were intermingled.

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Regional Variations in Tombs of Roman Egypt

The idea of this study is that funerary art in tombs of Roman Egypt which were creations of the cultural syncretism experienced by the Egyptian and non-Egyptian peoples (Greeks and Romans) through religion, myth, and beliefs in the afterlife, varied from one region to another and the differences are very clear between Alexandria and the chora. Although differences in socio-economic status and traditions existed in this period due to the division of the different ethnic groups, funerary motifs show all groups shared with each other the belief that the dead were sacred. Therefore, the goal of this research is to prove that although ethnic groups are by no means unified in their approach to everyday political, social, or educational matters, death binds them together, allowing for interaction in the funerary sphere but each region has its unique style of this depiction of the afterlife with different proportions of classical and traditional elements. The combination of different figurative styles, along with depictions of gods and goddesses used for mortuary rites, relay that ethnic boundaries were put aside in order to honor and protect the dead but they also varied in style from a region to another.

A number of scholars have addressed the issue of the relationship between ethnic identity and different forms of art and architecture in Roman Egypt. In a study entitled *Monumental Tombs of Ancient Alexandria: The Theater of the Dead*, [Susan Venit](#) has explored the concepts of ethnic identity and culture in monumental tombs of Alexandria, which provide the richest archaeological source of information about the ancient city. In his study on *Egyptian Cultural Identity in the Architecture of Roman Egypt (30 BC-AD 325)*, Youssri Abdelwahed has drawn attention to the complexity of reading ethnic identity of the tomb owners through funerary iconography of their tombs.

Another study for Suzan Venit, about *visualizing the Afterlife in Tombs of Graeco-Roman Egypt*, has dealt with the Tombs as a description for the decoration without such details of the background of the culture and the regional variations of such Tombs specifically during that Period.

In short, there is no single, comprehensive study on the issue of the depiction of Tomb owners in tombs of Roman Egypt. This paper attempts to present such a study. This study aims at filling in this research gap and providing many insights into the diverse funerary depiction of the tomb patrons in the different regions during the Roman period. The study used descriptive, analytical, and comparative methods to achieve these objectives. It mainly depends on archaeological evidence (Roman period tombs), funerary statuary, inscriptions and scenes, in addition to modern references and dissertations. The article focuses on the depiction of tomb Patrons in Tombs of Roman period in Egypt the tombs which date back from 31 BC to 325 AD, in certain regions (Alexandria as the place of the seat of authority at that time and the chora, such as Tuna el Gebel, Akhmim and Dakhla Oasis) on selected tombs.

The Depiction of the Tomb Patron

During the Roman Period, local elites, regardless of their ethnic origin, utilized Greek cultural symbols to enhance their social standing. Conversely, Egyptians were viewed unfavorably as inferior individuals characterized by disorderly behavior and various disreputable qualities. The concept of opportunism, thus, encompassed a nuanced handling of ethnic classifications that intricately linked memory with identity (Lewis, 1983, 39).

Citizens of Greek and Roman descent emulated the gods in attire and engaged in religious communities. Belonging to the mystery-cults, passed down to Romans from the Classical and Hellenistic Greek traditions as well as the Eastern cultures, promises a more opulent, blissful, and divine existence after death. These cults incorporate exotic symbols

and characteristics, thus challenging the exclusive dynastic principles of Ancient Egypt (Riggs, 2005, 95-105).

In Alexandria and the chora, the depiction of the tomb patron reflects a mutual exchange allowing these figures to adopt traits from different cultures while still maintaining essential characteristics of their own. The participation of tomb patrons in the religious cult appears to involve an encounter with the gods. Only Egyptian priests and pharaohs could view a deity face to face, but in the Graeco-Roman world this prescription seems to no longer apply (Venit, 2002, 142). Greek and Roman citizens imitated the divinities in dress and participate in the cult societies and this was so evident and obvious through the scenes of the tomb patrons. Membership in the mystery-cults inherited by Rome from Classical and Hellenistic Greece and the East advertises a richer, happier, and more godlike afterlife. The cults incorporate the exotic icons and attributes, but overrule the exclusive dynastic ideology of Ancient Egypt (Toynbee, 1971, 38). In the Roman period tombs, the Classical and Egyptian decoration merge to create a beautiful as well as symbolically significant place to rest for eternity (Toynbee, 1971, 38)

The Cult of Isis and its Initiates

Isis is an Egyptian goddess, her name "Isis" actually comes from the Greek language. It is the Greek version of the Egyptian word *Aset*, or *Eset*, which translates into "throne" or "queen of the throne" (Jackson, 2016, 17-20). The cult of Isis flourished in the Roman Republic and became part of the Roman state religion during the Julio-Claudian period*.

Thus, the Isiac attributes in the tombs suggest the mortal figures are initiates into the Cult of Isis. For Greek and Egyptians, the arrangement and expenses of burial might be met by the funds of a guild or religious association to which they belonged (Bowman, 1986, 137). This suggests that the tomb owners wanted to maintain their association with the cult even in death (Toynbee, 1971, 38), so it is so much important to discuss the cult of Isis and its initiates to figure out the attributes and poses of the tomb owners in their depictions in their tombs as initiates in the cult of Isis.

The majority of what we know about the cult of Isis comes from the Greco-Roman Period. As with every religion, there were varying levels of participation. Some people had been highly devoted to Isis and very active in her cult, whilst to others she was just another deity to invoke in healing or another festival to celebrate. People also have joined her cult for social and political reasons (Grant, 1953, 457). Many people turned to Isis and Osiris because their aspects of love, justice and resurrection brought comfort and hope. Isis in particular offered salvation and a mother's love (Jackson, 2017, 195-210).

Scholars suggest that Isis was especially worshiped as a domestic goddess and therefore gained the devotion of whole families. Studies proved that a greater number of priestesses existed in the Roman than the Greek sphere indicate that the number of Isis priestesses grew in proportion to the increasing popularity of the goddess over her consort Serapis (Heyob, 1975, 128-130).

According to Apuleius the priestesses and priests of the cult came from the elite classes, so as the tomb owners depict their association to the cult, this is considered as an indication of their status of the elite class. There is little information about the priestesses of Isis (Jackson, 2017, 195-210).

Although anyone could join the cult, the majority would have come from the wealthy elite and middle classes. Initiation was expensive and so excluded the poorer

*The Julio-Claudian dynasty, which comprised the first five Roman emperors: Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, and Nero. This line of emperors ruled the Roman Empire, from its formation, under Augustus, in 27 BC, until the last of the line, Emperor Nero, committed suicide, in 68 AD) http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/jucl/hd_jucl.htm, 2000)

members of society (Bell, 1957, 59). Women were known to have been made initiates of Isis; which is considered the highest class of devotees (Heyob, 1975, 128-130).

Studies of grave reliefs in Athens suggest that the women of the cult belonged to the prosperous middle class and the elite. Two inscriptions refer to the dedication of daughters from important Athenian families to the Isis cult. It was prestigious and a mark of social status; the most eminent magistrate of Athens was a member of the cult (Walters, 1988:63). All the Oriental cults began as private cults, but were often absorbed into the public life of the city. Many of them, such as those of Isis and Cybele* were relatively wealthy and had land donated by local councils (Dunand & Zivie-Coche, 2004, 229).

Wearing linen rather seems to have been a way of showing membership of the cult. A “*crowd with linen clothes and shaven heads*” was a standard phrase used to describe the worshipers of Isis (Jakson, 2017, pp. 195-210; Wilkinson, 2003:147; Lindsay, 1963, 263).

As the rites are secret we only get the barest of details from Apuleius in *The Golden Ass* but we are told that “*the act of initiation itself was performed as a rite of voluntary death and salvation attained by prayer*”. (Apuleius & Walsh, 1994, 232) the initiation rite was a costly affair. It was expensive, thus restricting the cult to the more affluent members of society. It was considered a privileged and effective place to pray as you were in close proximity to the sacred statue and hence the presence of the deity. Prayers were uttered in front of an altar upon which was burning incense (Jakson, 2017, pp. 195-210).

Ovid and Tibullus both refer to women loosening their hair to pray to Isis. In Roman society, and many others, unbound hair was acceptable during mourning but at other times it was unacceptable because it was considered a sign of sexual attractiveness and thus availability in the eyes of predatory males (Venit, 2010, 89-119).

There are some reasons why Isis was so appealing to the Greco-Roman world, that she offered something which the standard Greek and Roman religions could not.

The cult of Isis offered life after death, as did the Egyptian religion in general. This was very appealing to the Greeks and Romans whose religion was vague about this. Her capacity to feel deeply and to express that grief, and thus empathies with her suffering followers, enabled her to win people’s hearts and minds – both in Egypt and beyond. This kindness was an alien concept to most of the Olympian gods. She was a Savior who would help people in distress and this almost guaranteed her popularity (Venit, 2010, 31-96).

Of all the Oriental deities Isis established the closest contacts with the Greek and Roman traditions because she could be identified with their major goddesses. She was able to adopt new forms to suit her new followers without losing her identity. She was refashioned for her new worshipers and dressed in local attire but still managed to remain as Isis (Jakson, 2017, 195-210).

After the conquest of Egypt by Octavian in 31 BCE the cult of Isis and Serapis began to be established in Rome. Caligula (37-41 CE) was a devotee of Isis and built

* Cybele, was the great Phrygian mother of the gods, and goddess of motherhood, fertility and the mountain wilds, she was identified with a number of Greek goddesses(<https://www.theoi.com/Cult/KybeleCult.html>). Originally, the Cybelean cult was brought to Rome during the time of the [Second Punic War](#) (218 -201 BC) her cult had tremendous appeal to the average Roman citizen, more so [women](#) than men. She was responsible for every aspect of an individual's life. She was the mistress of wild nature, symbolized by her constant companion, the lion. Not only was she a healer, but also the goddess of fertility and protectress in time of war (although, interestingly, not a favorite among soldiers), even offering immortality to her adherents (<https://www.worldhistory.org/Cybele/>).

himself a temple of Isis and thus gave the Isiac cult state recognition. By the time of Vespasian (69-79 CE), there was a link between the imperial cults and the Isis cults. Some stylized postures were associated with mourning. Tomb illustrations show mourners in the following positions: hands open by their sides, arms crossed above or on the waist, one hand grasping the other arm or one hand raised to cover the face. Isis and Nephthys are portrayed in such postures whilst mourning Osiris. A common pose is kneeling with one hand covering the face. Kneeling is usually associated with mourning (Solmsen, 1979, 69).

Roman Art and Portraiture

Roman art is basically an extensive and creative development of Greek art. What differ are the interests and attitudes towards art. The most obvious change is a sudden increase in numbers of naturalistic portraits, the use of such portraiture not just by ruling families and the highest levels of administrative and religious dignitaries but also by local elites (Borg, 2012, 614-625).

Most private portraits with a known provenance however came from tombs, a pair of statues of Kom El-Shoqafa (Venit 2002a, 129). Evidence for the erection of portrait statues in public spaces is scarce. The clearest example is the over life-size marble statue of a woman from quarter of the second century AD from Oxyrhynchus (Breccia 1978, 39-40). Several statues were found beyond the city walls and thus must have adorned tombs as well (Tkaczow, 1993, 243-260).

Portrait busts were equally used in funerary contexts. Some of the most remarkable pieces have been found at Terenouthis* (Kom Abu Billo) on the western edge of the Delta (Grimm and Johannes, 1975, 20-21).

While Egyptian pharaohs and nobles had employed portraiture in cult and funerary contexts from the earliest times, during the Roman period the use of portraiture spread widely to include local elites through the country. There had been a trend towards naturalistic portraits already during the late and Ptolemaic periods, but with the Roman conquest, naturalistic, individualized portraits with fashionable hairstyle and contemporary dress and jewelry were introduced into all artistic genres that depicted individual humans (Borg, 1996, 19-84). Naturalistic features were introduced in tomb decorations. From the first century AD onwards, a considerable number of people decided to maintain some contemporary features of their life in this world (Borg, 2012, 614-625).

Throughout the empire, the ambitious followed the Romans in promoting themselves through honorific portraits in public places of their equivalent in sanctuaries and the funerary sphere (Borg, 1996, 150-176).

* Kom Abu Bello is a small village on the western edge of the Delta, approximately 70km north-west of Cairo. It is situated where the route leading from the Wadi el-Natrun approaches the Rosetta branch of the Nile. During the Graeco-Roman period the site was known as "Terenuthis," which was derived from the pharaonic words *ta Rennouti* (land of the goddess Renenutet). The modern name of the village, Tarana, is derived from the ancient name of the city. The name Kom Abu Bello refers specifically to the northwestern part of the site, where the Graeco-Roman cemetery is located. This name is probably derived from the name of the temple of the Greek god Apollo, the remains of which were found at the northern edge of the site. Most of the site is covered by the large cemetery of Graeco-Roman and Coptic date, which extends from the Tarana Bridge, just north of the Middle Kingdom cemetery, to the remains of the temple of Apollo, some 2km to the north. The site is one of the richest in Egypt for the Graeco-Roman and early Coptic periods (*circa* 300 BC to 500 AD), when it was an important center of trade for wine and salt from the Wadi el-Natrun. Stelae depicting the dead were placed inside tomb niches and became known as "Terenuthis stelae." Over 450 stelae, which date from the second-fourth centuries AD, have been recovered. The most common motif on the stelae is the deceased standing between two Egyptian-style columns with Greek pediments. Below him is a short text in either Greek or Egyptian (demotic). (Hawass, 1979, 76-87; Hawass, 2005, 498-500).

The local Egyptian elite were no exception and included people of different ethnic backgrounds from cities all over Egypt who cared enough about the new social order with its own status symbols to have a need for such portraits, and were wealthy enough to be able to afford them (Borg, 2012, 614-625).

Dress, Pose and Style of the Tomb Patrons:

Dress, pose, and appearance usually reflect the social status and position of the person, and in the Tombs in Roman Egypt the appearance of the Tomb owner indicates his job, social status, and ethnic affiliation.

Egyptian Traditional formal kilt for Males and dress for females

In Alexandria, the Main Tomb in the Catacomb of Kom El-Shoqafa, on the side walls of the anteroom, life-sized statues (a male and a female) (figs.1a&b) are found, they are the only case statuary of tomb owners, still in situ, from Roman period tombs in Egypt. They both stand in traditional Egyptian poses, garbed in traditional formal Egyptian dress, but their portrait heads are of a Roman style. The man is dressed in a (*šndyt*) kilt (Tortora, 1998, p. 29) . The head of the man is even closer to a portrait of the emperor Vespasian himself, he has snail-like curly hair over a face that shows a sculptural treatment of the furrowed brow, the hollows under the eyes, the bony cheeks, and the deep groove and ridges that form the nasolabial fold. The pupil of his eye is drilled out, giving him a penetrating gaze. As for the female figure in a diaphanous garment, the woman's head also takes on the form of a Roman portrait, and her hairstyle - the locks pulled to one side to form neat waves, which is found in many classicizing works from the Greek Classical period to Late Antiquity (Venit, 2002a, 115-129).



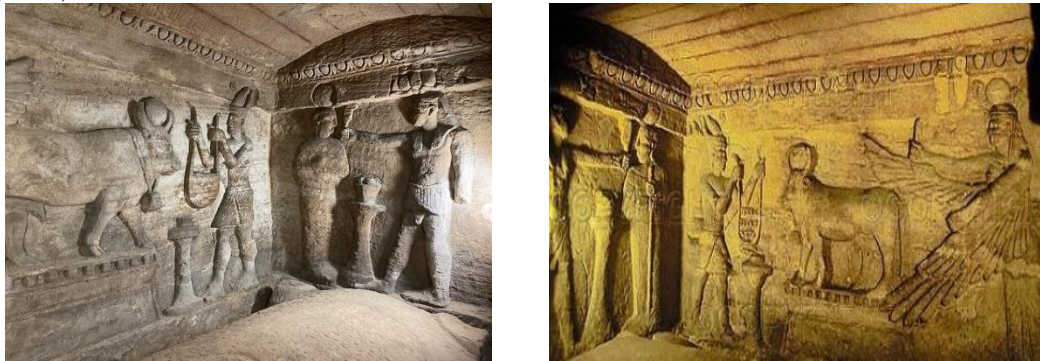
(Fig. 1 a & b) the female and the male figures of the tomb patrons of the Main tomb of Kom el Shoqafa. (<https://www.touregypt.net/featurestories/komelshuqafa2.htm>)

On the left and right side niches in the burial chamber, a male in a kilt and corset, wearing a pschent (*šhm.ty*) crown (Griffith, 1898, p.56), holds out a decorated collar, according to the association with Apis, or (Hapis) (Ceram, 1967, 130–131), the domination, and royalty; offering the collar to Apis will bestow the deceased a guarantee of the rejuvenation and the protection of the person and his tomb (Shipley, 2018, 13-16).

In front of An Apis bull, which is facing toward the central niche, on the back walls of the left and right niches are differentiated only by mirror imagery (figs. 2 a&b).

Each shows, the bull wears a solar disc between his horns and a naos shaped emblem on a cord around his neck. Behind the bull stands Isis Maat her wings are outstretched, holding the ostrich feather of truth. The appearance of goddess Isis behind Apis (Osir-Apis, or *wsjr-ḥp*) (Youtie, 1948, 9-29), suggested her normal role as the guardian of the dead Apis, as his wife. The worship of Apis in Alexandria was mainly connected with the Isiac cult; especially his cult was accompanied with Isiac sanctuaries outside Egypt. Therefore, Isis spread her wings to bestowing protection to the Osiris-Apis (Omran & Zouair, 2014, 44-65).

Images of deities and kings in tombs are meant to help the deceased in the afterlife. The association of the Apis bull with Osiris provides a reason for the bull's depiction. Although Serapis was the main god of Roman Alexandria, his funerary role cannot be compared to that of Osiris. Serapis was a fusion of the dead Apis bull with Osiris in the form of Osiris-Apis (see, Botti, 1898, 323-367). Osiris was the main god of death and had a double role as a dead and resurrected god. When the deceased is depicted as a mummified Osiris, he gains certain privileges, including being resurrected as Osiris and being protected by Isis and Nephthys (Abdelwahed, 2015, 239-240; see also Adriani, 1966, 180).



(Fig. 2 a&b) the back walls of the left and right niches are differentiated only by mirror imagery, Each shows a male in a kilt and corset In front of an Apis bull facing toward the central niche, wearing a pschent crown holds out a decorated collar <https://www.sparklesandshoes.com/2020/02/catacombs-of-kom-el-shuqafa/> , (<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/560487116096308098/>) .

The inclusion of the Roman Emperor (pharaoh) in the depictions of the tomb would suggest that the Roman emperor is charged with maintaining the balance and order of the Roman world (fig. 3). Most probable that the Roman emperor represents Vespasian who was proclaimed emperor of Alexandria by the Roman troops in Egypt. His presence was a momentous event in the social and political history of the city (Venit, 2002, 143). As the Alexandrian tomb Vespasian's presence suggests the tomb owners had a relationship with the emperor. In Roman society, individuals convey their personal and social identification in official documents with reference to status groups such as ethnicity, rank, bureaucratic or magisterial position, or occupation (Bowman, 1986, 137-138). It can be conceived that the tomb owners wanted to identify themselves by means of the wall paintings. The deceased was not concerned with the correct representation of Egyptian ideology. Rather, he seemed to have wanted to demonstrate his allegiance to the Roman emperor even in death. Thus, the tomb owners adopted and manipulate the Egyptian imagery not only to honor the deceased, but also to glorify the Roman emperor and his rule (Witt, 2012, 11; Kondoleon, 1995, 105-115). There are assumptions suggest that the Emperor refers to the deceased himself (Omran & Zouair, 2014, 44-65).

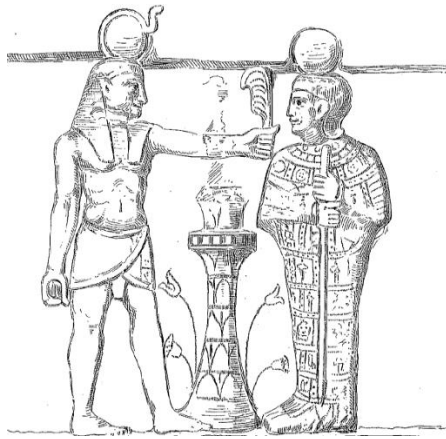
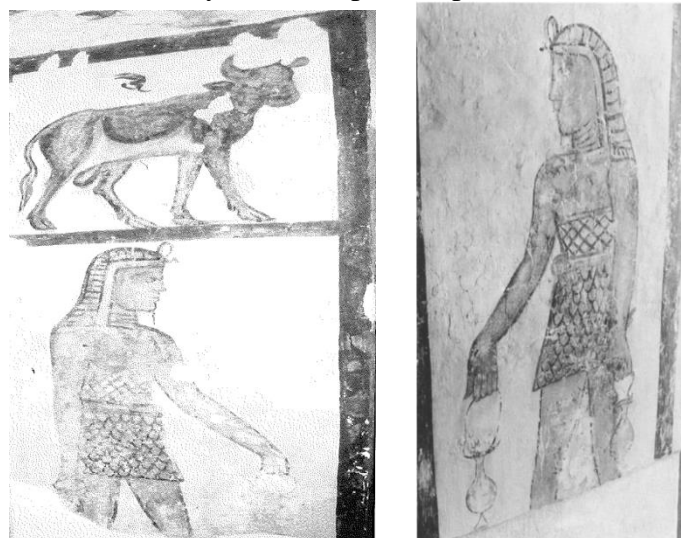


Fig. 3. The pharaoh (or the deceased) stand before Ptah, on the left wall of the right niche, the Main Tomb Kom el Shoqafa (after Venit, 2002 a, p. 141)

In the Tigrane Tomb, the tomb owner is depicted on the entrance wall, as a male acolyte of Isis guides the visitor into the tomb, he is represented in a traditional style garbed in kilts and corsets, and they add the pharaoh's *nemes* (*nms*) headdress (Bard, 1999, p.412) and remains of the false beard of a pharaoh (fig.4 a&b), they are represented below a striding Apis bull. These figures represent an Egyptian figure coupled with initiations of royalty, which is reemphasized by the images of the Apis bulls above them. The two male figures and the Apis bulls are the first images that greet the visitor to the tomb on both sides of the entrance, it is they who escort the visitor into the tomb, and their placement at the entrance to the burial chamber is the key to the explication of its narrative scenes (Adriani, 1956, 63-86; Picard, 1965, 95-100).

The two male figures identify the program as Isiac. The males are not deities; they wear short garments that appear as ancient Egyptian kilts, although these garments are bound about their pectorals in the manner of priests and initiates into the cult of Isis. Each male also wears a *nemes* headdress (Venit, 2017, p.78). The *situlas* that they carry are Isiac, cultic vessels, which are generally characterized by their high looped handle, flaring mouth, and round or papyriform shape with a knob at the bottom (related to the nurturing function of Isis) These vessels are meant to mark the deceased patrons as adherents to the initiatory cult of Isis (Venit, 2017, p.65).

The Apis bull is intimately bound with Serapis, and consequently, with his consort Isis, who was worshiped alongside him in the Alexandrian Serapium. In Alexandrian public religion, Isis is the most important female deity. Her cult grew and spread throughout the Mediterranean by the Roman Imperial period. By the time of the Tigrane tomb, Isis had assumed ascendancy over Serapis (Empereur 1995, 40-45).



(Fig. 4 a & b) Male figure holding a situla, on both sides of the entrance wall corridor, Tigrane tomb, Alexandria (after Venit, 1988, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/>)

The Military Garb:

In the Tigrane Tomb, the Tomb patron is depicted on the lunette wall of the left niche, a male clasping his hands in front of his torso, grasps two palm fronds (Omran, 2015, 1-24) and stands frontally flanked by seated jackals, winged figures in tunic, *nemes* headdress and leggings, and egg-shaped balls tied with fillets set on high stands. In his hair, he wears two ornaments that bend left and right. He turns his head as he gazes toward the figure at the right, while the two jackals that sit at his feet look up at him attentively (fig. 5). The tomb owner is depicted frontally, wears a garment as an initiate having gone through the simulated death his mummy wrappings falling away as he emerges nude to assume apparel fitting his new status. He holds palm branches, which are connected directly with the cult of Isis. Probably the branches speak to victory, but in the case of an initiate, it is victory over death (Omran, 2015, 1-24). The scene has a focal point, the frontal figure, the deceased posed frontally often set between two jackals. The central frontal figure is flanked by the two goddesses, who embrace him with their wings seem to be crowned as Osiris. The scene probably refers also to the resurrection of Osiris (*wsjr*) (Jackson, 2017, 51) (Venit, 1997, 701-729).

The Tigrane figure in the left niche (and those in the central and right niches, too) also seems to represent an initiate into the cult of Isis, and perhaps into the mysteries of Isis, with his legs tight and his arms before his body. His shaven head is characteristic of priests and male initiates of Isis, and he is nearly nude, another characteristic, the figure itself is an initiate participating in the "rising from the dead" ceremony (Venit, 1997, 701-729).



Fig. 5. The resurrection of the deceased, the back wall of the left niche, Tigrane Tomb, Alexandria (after, Venit, 1997, 701-729)

The back wall of the right niche, a young man garbed in tunic and leggings and wearing a helmet and takes the form of a *nemes* head cloth (fig.6), he is kneeling on one knee, he holds in each hand a green palm toward a standing female (a goddess or priestess stand in), who wears a diadem fronted by a uraeus (*j'rt*) (Dunand, et al., 2004, 347), she offers him sheaves of golden grain. These sheaves of grain the goddess on the right hand niche holds out to the kneeling man is an explicit connection to the Isis cult, while a figure with a censor follows him, with his leggings his imprecated tunic, and his *nemes* head-cloth, the kneeling male figure resemble the flanking males from the left niche (Venit, 1997, 701-729).



(Fig. 6) Right niche with scene of male kneeling before goddess, Tigrane Tomb, after Venit, 1997, fig.15).

The frontal male of the right niche and the kneeling male of the left niche, although dissimilarly garbed, are connected thematically by the palm branches that they and Isis and Nephthys (*Nebet-Het*) (El-Shahawy, 2005, p. 73) in the central niche also hold palm branches are associated with gods of the Osirian cycle and probably have an association with renewed life when shown in a funerary connection. They are also intimately associated with the cult of Isis (Corbelli, 2006, 19-20). The military aspect of the three figures, may denote the owner or owners of the tomb as soldiers a reasonable expectation given the strong military component of the Alexandrian population. It is likely that the tomb was constructed specifically for soldiers of Isiac dining club (Venit, 1997, 701-729).

The Tomb Owner in a Roman Toga

The Roman toga ([Classical Latin: 't̥o.ɡa\]](#), a distinctive garment of [ancient Rome](#), was a roughly semicircular cloth. It is a piece of material with a longer and a shorter straight edge the sides. The longer edge hangs over the left shoulder straight down the body in front. The upper or longer edge then comes across the back under the right armpit, across the breast, and then again over the left shoulder and down the back. The garment curves from each end of the short straight edge to a varying point on the edge of the cloth at its greatest length (Wilson, 1925, 105-108).

The toga was recognized as formal wear for [male Roman citizens](#). The type of toga worn reflected a citizen's rank in the civil hierarchy. Various [laws and customs](#) restricted its use to citizens, who were required to wear it for public festivals and civic duties (Vout, 1996, 204–220).

The Roman toga was the national dress of the race whose togated consuls, senators and emperors set the imperishable seal of success upon dignified, even nonchalant, statesmanship has not yet lost its force. The Romans were proud of themselves as the race that wore the toga. The Roman toga grew from a personal covering into a national bulwark. Its simplicity always remained, although fashion through a thousand years dictated many a changing nicety of fold and many an intricacy of drape (Wilson, 1925, 105-108).

In The Tomb of Petosiris, Dakhla oasis, Petosiris, the owner, is portrayed on the northern wall of the outer chamber beside the doorway leading from the first to the second room is depicted in a classical Roman garment and style in a large scale (fig. 7). The tomb owner stands in a *contrapposto* pose (*contrapposto*, (Italian: “opposite”), in the visual arts, a sculptural scheme, originated by the ancient Greeks, in which the standing human figure is poised such that the weight rests on one leg (called the engaged leg), freeing the other leg, which is bent at the knee) with weight on his left leg and wears a thick beard and white tunic (toga) and holds a papyrus-roll in his left hand, his right hand holds a floral garland. Curiously he is surrounded by representations of traditional ancient Egyptian religious symbols, including a hieroglyphic text (Kaplan, 1999, 182-185; Osing, et al. 1982, 81-94). At the left of the scene, Petosiris is garbed in a purple palium and pink tunic with two black clavi, and black sandals. In front of him in a smaller scale,

a priest garbed in an ankle length garment, his head is shaven holds out an offering of bread with his left hand while with his right hand he holds libation vessel (Osing, J., et al 1982, pp. 70-72). In front of him a liquid offering spills out from the offering table on the earth for the deceased. Behind the priest, and the grape vine Lade, which is connected to the region of the Dakhla oasis as it has abundant production of the vine grape there, the Nile god approaches carrying a libation vessel and bread (Riggs, 2005, p. 63; Kaplan, I., 1999, pp.182-185; Osing, et al 1982, pp. 81-94; Whitehouse, 1998, 262-263).



Fig. 7. The Tomb owner in a Roman Toga, the east wall, Room I, Tomb of Petosiris, Dakhla oasis, (source: <http://egyptmyluxor.weebly.com/el-mazawwaka-tombs---dakhla.html>)

The Tomb Owner in a Greek himation and chiton

The Greeks seem not to have laid any claim on immortality by virtue of their clothes; they were much prouder of the shape of their bodies, which their clothes tended to cover, and much prouder of the language they developed (Wilson, 1925, 105-108).

The Greek *himation* (ἱμάτιον) (Wilson, 2006, 245) was a large cloak, always orthogonal, unlike the Roman toga, which had some shaping. Like the toga, however, it appears to have had a variety of cultural meanings, depending on its proportion and how it was worn. Generally, when worn by women, it was a garment of decorous modesty, but it has been shown on *hetaerae* as a device for provocation (Wilson, 1925, 105-108). Structurally, the most elemental dress type is the *chiton* (*chiton*) (Wilson, 2006, 245), it is a form of [tunic](#) that fastens at the shoulder, worn by men and women of [ancient Greece](#) and Rome (Radicke, 2023, 243–276). It is constructed in several ways. The most commonly represented is accomplished by stitching two rectangular pieces of fabric together along either sideseam, from top to bottom, forming a cylinder with its top edge and hem unstitched. The top edges are then sewn, pinned, or buttoned together at two or more points to form shoulder seams, with reserve openings for the head and arms. The *Himation* and *chiton* were women's apparel of ancient Greece. (Koda, 2003,1)

In House Tomb no. 21 Tuna El-Gebel, which dates back to 1st century AD, the tomb owner is depicted on the upper zone of the anteroom, in the section on the west wall next to the entrance (fig. 8), the deceased woman (tomb owner) is shown garbed in a *himation*, wrapped over in a *chiton*, she spreads her arms slightly to the proper right of the deceased, Thoth (*Dhwtj*) in Ibis-headed form (Budge, 1904, 402), and to her left, falcon-headed Horus (*hr*) (Meltzer, E. S., 2003,164–168), raises libation vessels, and bathe her in purifying liquid (Riggs, 2005, 134-139). Above her, is a falcon (ba-bird). The woman here in this image, at the anteroom, is still connected to the world of the living, in other

words, the image is supposed to represent a woman ready to undertake the voyage to the afterlife. The black desiccated form of the female's shadow appears behind Horus. It replicates her gesture, but in a composite pose (Kaplan, 1999, 162-165).



(Fig. 8) a purification scene of the deceased woman wearing a himaton, anteroom, House tomb no. 21, Tuna el-Gebel, (after Venit, M. S., 2017, pl.4.14)

In Akhmim, Salamuni, Bissing's Tomb from 1897, on the wall facing the entrance, in the anteroom, the scene of the tomb owner (fig.9), is facing the visitor. He is represented in a large scale wears a chiton with two vertical purple stripes and a *himation* pulled around his chest, he holds a *rotulus* or a scroll and a laurel branch which is a sign of victory (Riggs 2005, pp. 164-166; Kaplan 1999, pp. 166-174), and a mummiform *situla* is in his lowered right hand (Riggs, 2005, 164-5, fig. 77). The *situla* in the tomb owner's right hand associates him with Isis. By extension, the *situla* identifies him as a member of Isis' cult and as an initiate into her mysteries (Venit, 2017, 184; Kaplan 1999, 176-178).

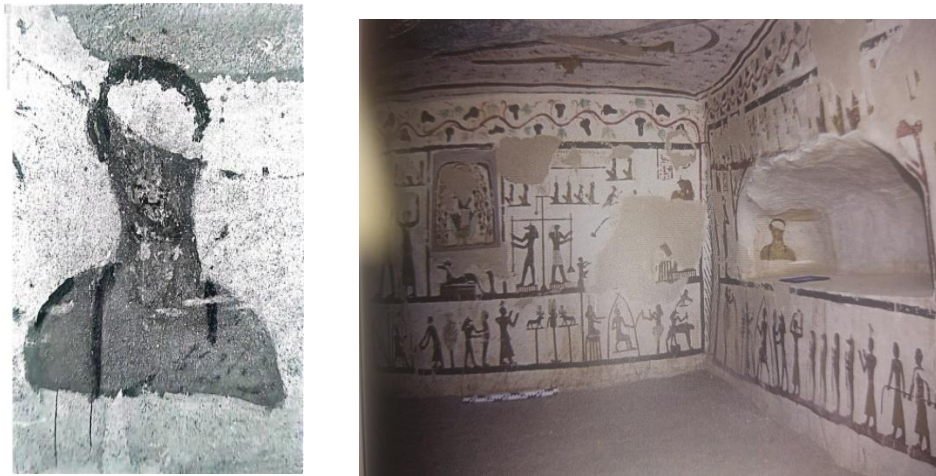


(Fig. 9) The tomb owner, and a depiction of him in smaller scales, facing the entrance, anteroom, the bissing's tomb 1897, El-Salamuni Tomb C3, (after Venit, M. S., 2017, pl, XXXII)

The Tomb Owners in Graeco Roman Funerary Portrait Busts:

Funerary portraits were very common during the Roman Period, as previously mentioned, the facial features are more natural nearest to the real face, painted in vivid colors (Riggs, 2005, 131-135). The tomb of Petubastis, Dakhla oasis, consists of a single decorated chamber with recessed shelves intended to house the mummies of the deceased. On the eastern wall painted on the interior of the shelf, a male funerary portrait bust of the tomb-owner, in Graeco-Roman style, painted onto plaster (fig. 10 a&b)

(Winlock, 1936, 35-36; Osing, et al. 1982, 70-81) the placement of the deceased portrait bust at the shelf, where the deceased is laid is a replacement of the mummy portrait, which was very common in Roman Egypt.



Figs.10a &b): the East wall cut with the burial niche with the funerary Portrait of the tomb owner Petubastis, Tomb of Petubastis, Dakhla oasis (after, Venit, 2017, fig. 5.4, pl.xxv).

In the Tomb of Petosiris, Dakhla oasis, on the ceiling in Room I, in the center of the Zodiac circle are four human funerary portrait busts painted onto plaster (fig. 11) two bearded males,(probably Petosiris and his son, and a female (probably Petosiris' wife) and a head of Janus- figure, the head of a bull or a jackal (Pinch, 1974, 36), the placement of the human funerary busts of the Tomb owners on the ceiling, could be for their belief that they after death they went to heaven to join the gods of the heavens.

All figures on the ceiling of Room I, both anthropomorphic humans and deities and the animals of the zodiacal signs are classical (Graeco-Roman style). The human figures or garbed in contemporaneous garments, these figures are connected to of the image of the patron of the tomb (Venit, 2017, 174-175; Osing, et al. 1982, 96-100).



Fig. 11. The tomb patrons' busts, ceiling, Room I, Tomb of Petosiris, Dakhla oasis, (source: <http://egyptmyluxor.weebly.com/el-mazawwaka-tombs---dakhla.html>)

Also the ceiling in Room II of the same tomb carries a Zodiac in classical with Egyptian figures (fig.12). In The center of the zodiac are two funerary portrait busts, for the tomb owner and his wife, painted onto plaster, in a Graeco-Roman style, similar to those in room I, and there is a single figure of a mythological creature a frontal figure of it is a winged eye of Horus with human legs and ten erected uraeus above head, the figure for nude child, the child Horus (probably Harpocrates) standing atop two crocodiles while holding two erected uraeus (Kakosy, 1981, 255-260). Horus the child adds

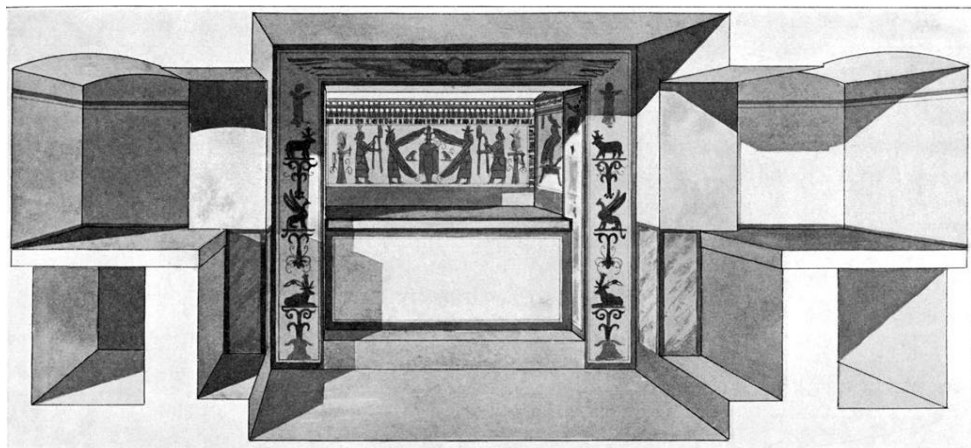
apotropaic power to the central image like that of the gorgeon in the Tigrane tomb ceiling which protects the tomb from above (see, Armour, 1986, 54-61).



(Fig.12) Tomb patrons' busts, ceiling, Room II, Tomb of Petosiris, Dakhla oasis, (source, <http://egyptmyluxor.weebly.com/el-mazawwaka-tombs---dakhla.html>)

The Tomb Owner in the Form of a God

The god Osiris: in the Sieglin Tomb's iconography, which is located in Gabbari district, Alexandria, (dates back to the Late 1st early 2nd century AD) (Rowe, 1942, p. XV), the burial chamber's central niche, is limited to scenes and imagery associated to Osiris and Re, as well as Egyptian eschatological terminology. Osiris is depicted frontally (fig. 13), on the back wall of the central niche (Venit, 2002a, 124-125; Schreiber, 1908, 7; Von Bissing, 1901, 58-59). He is flanked by two deities with outstretched wings, who must be Isis and Nephthys, and by another deity to both side richly dressed and carrying linen for mummy bandaging (Pagenstecher, 1919, 148, 184; Pagenstecher, 1923, 119), a cartouche appears to be behind the upper part of the linen strips. On the right-hand lateral wall a Horus falcon faces the visitor to the tomb (Venit, 2002b, p.124; Schreiber, 1908, p. 7), the Apis bull is depicted on the lateral sides of the niche, which is connected to the main god of Alexandria as a region.



(Fig. 13): plan of Gabbari.Sieglin-tomb Alexandria, (after, Schmidt, 2021, 314, fig.1)

The goddess Isis: In Stagni Tomb in Alexandria, (This tomb was originally one of three hypogea uncovered in May 1989 in the area between Gabbari and Wardian. It is now reconstructed at the catacomb of Kom el-Shouqafa, it dates back to the 1st century), a female figure, probably Isis-Aphrodite (Dunand et al., 2004, 273), is painted on the back wall of the niche (fig. 14). Given the absence of syncretised Graeco-Egyptian deities in funerary iconography, the depiction of Isis-Aphrodite is unique to the Stagni Tomb. She stands frontally, flanked with sphinxes standing in an Egyptian canopy with papyriform columns which terminate in a lotus bud and segmental pediment. The depiction of Isis-Aphrodite in the central niche of Stagni tomb instead of Osiris it could

be a portrait of the owner of the tomb as the deceased woman and the choice of Isis Aphrodite instead of the expected mummified Osiris, her assimilation to a mummified Isis-Aphrodite suggests, that the deceased woman was a member of her cult. Isis stands frontally, flanked to either side by a crouching sphinx relaxing on a base, she holds in her hands a staff, which terminate in a lotus bud. The Erotes on the pier and her seductive pose connect her with Aphrodite, and the staff with lotus bud, the crown and the Egyptianizing naos is Isiac (Venit, 1999, 641- 669, Venit 2002a, 159-165; Abdelwahed, Y., 2015, Appendix III).



(Fig. 14). The niche on the back wall of the Stagni Tomb, Alexandria, with Isis-Aphrodite flanked by sphinxes standing in an Egyptian *naioskos*, the (after, Venit, 2002a, p.164)

Persephone (Περσεφόνη), (*Persephónē*) (Buxton, 2004, 218; Chadwick, 1976, p. 95) in Tombs of Persephone No. 1 and 2, Kom El Shoqafa (figs. 15, 16), on the lower register of the central wall, Persephone is shown struggling with Hades (Ἅιδης), (*Háidēs*) (Buxton, 2004, 69), while three goddesses appear to respond to the act of abduction. On the left Artemis (Ἄρτεμις) (Webster, 1995, p.74) and Athena (Ἀθηνᾶ, *Athēnā*) (Burkert, 1985, 139) seem to be trying to intervene, while above Aphrodite (Ἀφροδίτη (*Aphrodītē*)) (Buxton, 2004, 45-49), Eros (Ἔρως) (Buxton, 2004, 78) is shooting an arrow towards Hades and Persephone (Buxton, 2004, 30; Botti, 1898, 347-367).

On the right wall of tomb 1 and 2 the lower scenes express the resurrection of Persephone and her return from the underworld, while Hermes (Buxton, 2004, 50) is shown pouring libation to guarantee her safe passage from the underworld. The iconographic trope of Hades is seizing an unwilling Persephone and carrying her off in his chariot, her arms flailing, is a late addition to the visual description of the scene (Empereur, 1995, pp. 20-22; Venit, 2002a., pp. 145-6).



Fig.15, Tomb No.1 the abduction of Persephone tomb, Kom El Shoqafa complex, (after Venit, 2002a, p.146)



Fig.16, Tomb No.2 the abduction of Persephone tomb, hall of Caracalla, Kom El Shoqafa complex, (www.google.com/komel shoqfa tombs)

In Tuna El-Gebel, the house tomb M3, Tomb of the abduction of Persephone, on the central niche of the burial chamber, Persephone (fig. 17, 18), wears the saffron-

colored garment (κροκῖνος) bride's gown, her arms upraised in distress. Eros, flies or (runs) behind the chariot pointing at the scene, with his bow stunning but his arrow is not yet ready to be released (Corbelli, 2006, 26; Gabra, 1971, 71-92).



(Fig.17) the Abduction of Persephone, Tomb No. 3, Tuna El Gebel, (after, Venit, 2017, pl.XI).

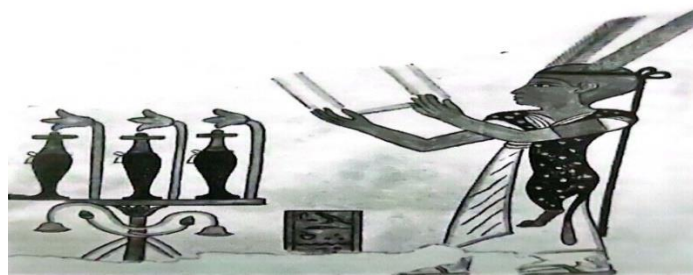


(Fig. 18). The back wall depicts the rape of Persephone, Second room of the house tomb M 3, Tuna el-Gebel. (after, Lembke, 2014, Pl. 7)

Tomb Owner in Priest's or Priestess's Garment

A Leopard Skin (Sem Priest)

In house Tomb 21, Tuna el Gebel, the anteroom, facing the procession of the gods and goddesses, a figure that distinguishes herself from others in the tomb reads from a papyrus scroll held in her outstretched hands in front of an altar consists of a *sema tawy* symbol, on which a three libation vessels stand (fig. 19). Her skull is banded with a ribbon that attaches two feathers, and she wears the leopard skin of priesthood. This figure allows the deceased patron of the tomb to be recognized as a priestess. It is possible that the deceased figure acting as a *sem*-priest, although others believe that, as the figure is reading from a scroll that indicates that she is a lector priest (Riggs, 2005, 129-139).



(Fig. 19) The deceased holds a papyrus scroll, the anteroom, House tomb no. 21, Tuna el-Gebel, (after Venit, 2017, pl.4.18).

Garments associated with the Cult of Isis' and her Priests and Priestesses

The main tomb in Kom el Shoqafa contains six carved and painted niche scenes each with two funerary figures (McKenzie, 2007, 136-150). The large scene on the back wall of each niche is flanked to the left and right with smaller niches decorated with one human figure facing a divinity or priest. In the central niche, priests facing human figures across an altar, a male on one side and a female on the other flank the lustration scene (Riad, 1964, 52-59).

Each mortal male and female figure is shown wearing a sun disk and the garments associated with Isis and her cult (Venit, 2002a, 138-139). The scene on the left wall of the central niche (fig. 20), the male stands in profile and faces a priest, her wears a garment bound around his waist (Von Bissing, 1901, pp. 58-59, pl, VIII). His right hand

grasps the linen strips that mortuary figures often hold and his left palm is turned towards his face in a male gesture of mourning (Venit, 2002, 138; Holst-Warhaft, 1992, 103). In the opposite scene (fig. 21), the female figure wears a layered wig and a long, slinging garment similar to the mantle worn by Isis and her cult initiates (Arslan, 1997, 138).



(Fig. 20) the left wall of the central niche in the burial chamber of the main tomb at Kom el Shoqafa, a lector priest facing a male initiate (after, Venit, 2002a, p. 138)



Fig. 21: *Pterophoros facing a female initiate*, Main Tomb, Kom el-Shoqafa.(after Venit, 2002, 138)

The Tomb Owner in Traditional Egyptian Garment

In House Tomb no. 21 Tuna El-Gebel, the tomb owner is depicted on the upper zone of the anteroom, above the end to either side of the entrance door on the north wall (fig. 22), mirror images of female wearing red garment that leaves her breasts exposed. These figures are identified as the deceased woman to whom the tomb is dedicated. Also, on the upper frieze at the north and the east wall (fig. 23), shows the deceased wearing an Egyptian close-fitting garment and an Egyptian wig, and is followed by her shadow.



(Fig. 22) mirror images for the deceased woman, above the end to either side of the entrance door on the north wall, anteroom, House tomb no. 21, Tuna el-Gebel, (after Venit, M. S., 2017, pl.4.14)



(Fig. 23) the deceased with her shadow, the east wall, the upper figured frieze, anteroom, House tomb no. 21, Tuna el-Gebel, (after Venit, M. S., 2017, pl.4.16)

In the Bissing's tomb 1897, Salamuni, Akhmim, to the right of the tomb patron are two registers of scenes (fig. 9); on the lower register another depiction of the deceased in a small scale, wearing a long garment, stands to the left of an offering table, to the right a bald male wearing a traditional kilt holding a libation vessel and a palm branch, as a sign of Victory in the Roman world, and behind him a chapel from a leafy tree (Von Bissing, 1950, 560-566). On the upper register, a third depiction of the deceased, he is

shown tall, clean shaven wearing a long garment, raising his hands in devotion before a fetish terminating with the crown of Amun flanking the stand of the effigy, to gods facing one another. Also on the lower register of the right hand wall (fig. 24), In front of the procession of daemons stands the deceased with upraised arms, he wears a long garment (Von Bissing, 1946/47, 7-16).



(Fig. 24) The *tomb owner venerates the daemons*, anteroom, Bissing's Tomb 1897, El-Salamuni Tomb C, Akhmim (after, Venit, 2017, pl. XXXIV.)

Table (1): Comparison between the different depictions of the tomb owners in various regions of Roman Egypt

| Region | Tomb | Date | Gender | Style | Dress | Pose | Position | Location | Fig. No. |
|------------|---|---------------------------------------|---------------|---|--|----------------------------------|---|--------------|----------|
| Alexandria | Catacomb of Kom El-Shoqafa Main tomb | Second half of the first century AD | Male & female | Statues Roman in head and facial features and Egyptian in dress | <i>Shendyt</i> kilt for the male and dress for the female (formal) | Traditional Egyptian pose | High status for the assimilation of the emperor | Entrance | 1 a & b |
| | | | | A Roman Emperor (pharaoh or king) | Male, Formal <i>shendyt</i> kilt , wearing <i>pschnet</i> crown | Facing the Apis bull, Facing god | | Side niches | 2 a&b, 3 |
| | | | | Egyptian | Garments associated with the cult of Isis, sundisc on their heads | Profile | Cult initiates | Side niches | 20 & 21 |
| | Persephone Tombs | Late first or early second century AD | Female | Greek-style | Brides' gown | Flailing from Hades | Unknown | Central wall | 15 & 16 |
| | The Tigrane Tomb | Hadrian | Male | Egyptian style (pharaoh) | A kilt and a nemes headdress | Holding situla | Initiate into the cult of Isis | Entrance | 4 a & b |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------|---|----------------|-------------------|----------------|---|---|------------------------|---------|
| | | Early second century AD | | | | | | | |
| | | | | Roman style | Military garb | Kneeling before Isis, with a nemes headdress and uras holding Palm branch | Related to Roman legionary (soldier of Isiac dining club) | Side niche in the tomb | 5 & 6 |
| | | | | Roman style | Military garb | Frontal between two dogs, holding Palm branch, | | Side niche in the tomb | |
| | The Sieglin Tomb | Late 1 st early 2 nd century AD | Male | Egyptian | God Osiris | Frontal | | Central niche | 13 |
| | The Stagni Tomb | 1 st century | Female | Graeco-Egyptian | Isis-Aphrodite | Frontal holding a staff with lotus bud, flanked by sphinxes | A member in the cult of Isis | Central niche | 14 |
| Tuna el Gebel | The Tomb of Isidora | Hadrian/Antonius pious | Unmarried girl | Only inscriptions | | | | | |
| | Tomb of the Abduction of Persephone | End of the 1 st century AD | Woman | Greek-style | Bride's gown | Upraised arms in distress | unknown | Central niche | 17 & 18 |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|--|--|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------|
| | House Tomb No. 21 | 1 st century AD | Female | Greek style | Himation & Chiton | Frontal, her arms spread | Priestess | Next to the entrance | 8 |
| | | | | Egyptian style | Leopard skin, | Profile, reading from a papyrus scroll | Sem or lector priestess | Anteroom | 19 |
| | | | | Traditional Egyptian style | Egyptian Garment, hair loose | Profile, upraised hands | | anteroom | 22 & 23 |
| Akhmim El Salamuni | Von Bissing's Tomb 1897 | 2 nd century AD | Male | Greek style | Himation & chiton | Controposto, holds a (<i>rotulus</i>) , and a situla | Initiate into the cult of Isis | Facing the entrance | 9 |
| | | | | Egyptian style | Long garment , another with a kilt | Upraised hands, the other holds a vessel and palm branch | | | 9 & 24 |
| Dakhla Oasis | The Tomb of Petubastis | 1 st century AD | Male | Graeco-Roman style | A funerary bust | Frontal | priest of Thoth | Burial shelf, facing the entrance | 10 |
| | Tomb of Petosiris | 1 st century AD | Male and female | Roman style | Male in Roman Toga Holds papyrus roll and floral garland Surrounded by | Controposto | Initiate into the cult of Isis | Entrance | 7 |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|-----------------|--------------------|-------------------------|---------|--|---------|---------|
| | | | | | hieroglyphic symbols | | | | |
| | | | Male and female | Graeco-Roman style | Funerary portrait busts | Frontal | | Ceiling | 11 & 12 |

Result and Analysis:

There is mutual exchange between the classical and Egyptian cultures, in both Alexandria and the chora. The tomb owners utilized Greek cultural symbols to enhance their social standing, but the Tomb Patrons still maintaining essential characteristics of their own.

The goddess Isis' popularity increased over her consort Serapis during the Roman Period. Greek and Roman citizens preferred to imitate the divinities in dress and participate in the cult societies. Most of the high status of Roman, Greek, and also local elites preferred to be depicted as members in the cult of Isis. Membership in the mystery-cults offered a richer, happier, and more godlike afterlife.

Most of the scenes of the Tomb patrons with the Isiac attributes in the tombs suggest that they were initiates into the cult of Isis, that the tomb owners wanted to maintain their association with the cult even in death. In the Roman period tombs, the Classical and Egyptian decoration merge to create a beautiful as well as symbolically significant place to rest for eternity.

The priestesses and priests of the cult of Isis came from the elite classes. Initiates of Isis were considered the highest class of devotees. As initiation rite was a costly affair and expensive, thus restricting the cult to the more affluent members of society, that the majority would have come from the wealthy elite and middle classes.

The cult of Isis and Serapis began to be established in Rome After the conquest of Egypt by Octavian in 31 BC. By the time of Vespasian (69-79 CE), there was a link between the imperial cults and the Isis cults as seen in the Tomb of Kom El Shoqafa.

Naturalistic portraits increased in numbers of the highest levels of administrative and religious dignitaries, also by local elites. Portrait busts were used in funerary contexts and naturalistic features were introduced in tomb decorations. A considerable number of people decided to maintain some contemporary features of their life in this world in the decorations of their tombs.

There had been a trend towards naturalistic portraits during the Roman conquest; naturalistic, individualized portraits with fashionable hair style and contemporary dress and jewelry were introduced into all artistic genres that depicted individual humans like in tombs of Kom el Shoqafa, Petubastis, Petosiris, the Bissing's Tomb of 1897.

Egyptians felt a need to adopt Roman habits to adopt this new status as they ascended into the highest positions in Roman government. Throughout the empire, the ambitious followed the Romans in promoting themselves through honorific portraits in public places of their equivalent in sanctuaries and the funerary sphere.

Local Egyptian elite of different ethnic backgrounds from cities all over Egypt who were able to afford such portraits, they cared enough about the new social order with its own status symbols.

The gender of most of the Tomb Patrons is known from the iconography of the Tomb, statuary, and inscriptions, but some of the tombs does not have any remains that can tell us about the gender of the owner. So from the available data, tombs are classified according to the gender of their owners (female, male, and for male and female together).

Most of the tombs which were intended for females, the owners were unmarried girls. In Roman Egypt, the prematurely dead were held in high regard of special veneration. Fine burial was worth for young women who died before marriage, that richer burials might make up for what the prematurely dead have missed in life, and a girl's family might have supported an independent burial for her more readily than a husband would have (Riggs, 2005, 131).

In the Tombs of Persephone 1 and 2, Kom el Shoqafa, Alexandria, and at House Tomb No. M3, Tuna el Gebel (fig.4 a& b) even the gender of the owner is not emphasized, and there are no labels of the names identifying the figures, as during the Roman period,

Persephone's myth was known enough, and there was no need for labels, but most probably these tombs was intended for females, as in the tomb of Isidora at Tuna el Gebel, there is a mention of Hades, on the lateral walls leading to the burial room. The Two epigrams, which are inscribed on the walls to the left and right of the doorway leading to the second chamber, the chamber is referred to in one of the inscriptions as the (θάλαμος) a woman's chamber, or bridal chamber, and an euphemism for the House of Hades (Venit, 2017, 92; Thomas, 1992, 319), which associates the death of a female young girl with the abduction of Persephone by Hades, that means Persephone is a metaphor for the deceased young girl and Hades refers to death which kidnapped her.

The Stagni Tomb seems to be intended for a woman. As the rear wall of the niche is painted with a female figure, probably Isis-Aphrodite as she might represent the deceased woman. (Abdelwahed, Y., 2015, Appendix III).

The House Tomb No. 21, Tuna El Gebel, is intended for a young woman called *Ta-Shyryt*. Her name is partially preserved in demotic inscription in one scene and the first part of her name suggests that she died as an unmarried girl, and we could assume that she died unmarried because: her tomb is the best elaborate decorated tomb in Tuna el Gebel after the tomb of Petosiris. Comparing with the tomb of Isidora who died at a young age and as unmarried girl, and as known that unmarried girl is worthy of a fine burial (Riggs, 2005, 130-131). There is no representation of a male partner in her tomb like other tombs of male and female owners. Also the Tomb owner is represented in different styles in the Tomb, in a *himation*, an Egyptian garment and a leopard skin, that she was probably a priestess.

In The Tigrane Tomb, the Tomb owner is a male, represented as a male acolyte of Isis, who guides the visitor into the tomb, on the lower part of the entrance wall, also he is represented on the walls of the burial room in different poses (Adriani, 1956, 63-86; Picard, 1965, 95-100).

The Wardian Tomb III (*Saqiya* Tomb), the owner is a male, for the is a depiction of a bearded herm of Pan set in woodland enclosure (Rodziewicz, 1989, pp. 329-337) and a shepherd tending his flock and protects it from the lurking jackal, all that refers to a male's life (Barbet, 1980, 391-400).

In Sieglin Tomb in Alexandria, the Tomb Patron is a male, as Osiris is depicted frontally (probably the deceased in the form of Osiris), on the back wall of the central niche (Schreiber, 1908, 7; Von Bissing, 1901, pp. 58-59).

The Bissing's Tomb from 1897, In Akhmim, the tomb owner is most likely a man. He is represented in a large scale, facing the visitor, wearing a chiton with two vertical purple stripes and a himation pulled around his chest, he holds a (*rotulus*) or a scroll and a laurel branch (Riggs 2005, 164-166; Kaplan 1999, 166-174), and a mummiform situla is in his lowered right hand (Riggs, 2005, 164-5, fig. 77).

The Zodiac Tomb or the tomb of the two brothers, in Athribis, is owned by the brothers *Pamehyt* and *Ibpameny* the younger. The tomb includes among its mythological inscriptions horoscopes for the two brothers buried there. (Neugebauer, and Parker, 1969, 96-98; Smith, 2002, 240).

The tomb of Petubastis, the Dakhla Oasis, the village of el-Muzawaqa, the owner is a male (Petubastis) depicted on the north wall of the niche of the eastern wall is a portrait bust of tomb owner is drawn in the Graeco-Roman style (Osing, et al. 1982, 36-37). Petubastis was a priest of Thoth at *st.w3h* (the ancient Egyptian name of Dakhlah Oasis), a designation that may have encompassed the entire western area of the oasis in which "the decorated hill" is located. On the ceiling of his tomb there is a demotic funerary inscription acknowledges his office, he is described as a priest of Thoth and lord of the oasis, and aspiration to his immortality. The content of this funerary inscription

bears remarkable resemblance to that of Petosiris, addressing the deceased as Osiris-NN and wishing his *ba* to reach heaven and accompany Osiris and Sokar (Venit, 2017, 158).

The Main Tomb of Kom El-Shoqafa, is intended for a male and a female Tomb Patrons, on the side walls of the anteroom, a life-sized statues (a male and a female), both stand in traditional Egyptian poses, also on the lateral wall of the niches in the burial room, symmetrical depictions of the Tomb owners a male and a female, it seems that the owners has a connection with the emperor (Venit, 2002a).

The tomb of Petosiris, in the Dakhla oasis, the owners are a male and a female, the owner Petosiris, is portrayed on the northern wall of the outer chamber beside the doorway leading from the first to the second room as a large figure wearing a long Roman-style. Curiously he is surrounded by representations of traditional ancient Egyptian religious symbols, including a hieroglyphic text (Kaplan, 1999, 182-185; Osing, et al., 1982, 81-94; Riggs, 2005, 63). On The ceiling in Room 1, In the center of the Zodiac circle are four human busts two bearded males, for the tomb owner and his son, a female, for the Tomb owner's wife and a head of Janus- figure, the head of a bull or a jackal (Pinch, 1974, 36.), and the ceiling of Room II, in the center a depiction of the Tomb owner and his wife.

In Alexandria, the main Tomb of Kom El Shoqafa, on the left and right sides of the antechamber leading to the burial room, the two statues of the Tomb owner and his wife in a traditional Egyptian clothes, formal kilt, and Egyptian dress, the head and coiffeur of classical and Roman style, and this pose confirms their high standard and status social position because he used an emperor style. Also the left and right niches in the burial chamber he is depicted wearing a kilt facing the Apis bull as the deceased is depicted in the form of a pharaoh or emperor (Omran, & Zouair, 2014, 44-65). In the Tigrane Tomb also the two males represented on the entrance wall, guiding the visitor to the interior of the tomb, also represented in a formal Egyptian kilt, wearing a nemes headdress with uraeus of royalty and holding the situla of Isis, to refer him as an initiate of Isis, and above him the Apis bull, her consort and patron god of Alexandria. Also the military aspect garb worn by the Tomb Patron in the Tigrane Tomb in Alexandria, which is not repeated in any other tomb, shows the influence of the region, as Alexandria was a place of Roman legions, and this tomb could be owned by soldiers of the Roman legion and associated to the goddess Isis in death.

In the Chora the situation is different; the Tomb Patrons chose a Graeco- Roman style and pose. In the Dakhla oasis, in the outer chamber on entrance wall to the second room of the tomb of Petosiris, facing the visitor, the Tomb Patron is depicted in a Roman style Toga, which was the national dress of the race whose togated consuls, senators and emperors, he is depicted a large scale, the pose is a *contrapposto* pose not traditional like in Alexandria. He holds papyrus-roll to show his high staus of education and position. In front of him is a grape vine lade as an influence of the region of the Dakhla oasis which was very rich in grapes harvest.

In Salamuni, Akhmim, the Bissing's tomb of 1897, the Tomb patron is depicted in a Graeco-Roman style, wearing a *himation* and *chiton*. A *himation* was the Greek toga, had a variety of cultural meanings, also painted on the entrance wall facing the visitor, with his weight on his right leg, holding *rotulus* or a scroll and a situla of Isis, which reflects his culture and identity.

In Tuna El Gebel, House Tomb No. 21, the Tomb Patron Ta Sheryt, depicted on the upper zone, anteroom next to the entrance, garbed in a himation, wrapped over in a chiton, with her hands open and loose hair, for the Greeks it is acceptable for women to have

their hair loose, she is being purified by Thoth and Horus, also her shadow is depicted replicating her gesture which confirms her Egyptian beliefs.

The depiction of funerary portrait busts is another category of Graeco-Roman style of depicting the Tomb Patrons. In the Tomb of Petubastis, there is a funerary bust of the Tomb patron on the north wall of the niche shelf where the mummy is supposed to be placed on, and also in a Graeco-Roman coiffeur, naturalistic style. In the Tomb of Petosiris on the ceilings of Room I and II, the Tomb owners are depicted with the same style of the tomb patron on the entrance wall and they are painted into plaster in the center of the Zodiacs, on the ceilings of room I and II the male is depicted wearing a toga, his hair coiffeur in a Roman style, and the female wears a *chiton* and a *himation* her hair is loose and colored they both have naturalistic feature. And the placement of their depictions emphasized their beliefs with Egyptian and Graeco-Roman gods.

The tomb owners were also depicted as gods, in both Alexandria and the chora onto the burial niches of their tombs, which is the proper place for depicting gods, they also considered the gender in depicting gods, for females they were assimilated with Isis Aphrodite and Persephone, while males were assimilated with Osiris, and all the gods were in a Graeco-Roman innovative style.

As for Alexandria, in the Sieglin Tomb, the male appears on the burial chamber's central niche; Osiris is depicted frontally, with Isis and Nephthys on both sides. This pose of Osiris is unique, because Osiris usually represented in this section of the tomb (central niche of the burial room) as a mummy laid on a funerary bed, but here, he is represented in a different pose and it represents the deceased man as god Osiris. With regards females, in the Stagni Tomb, the deceased in the form of goddess Isis-Aphrodite, is painted on the back wall of the central niche, stands frontally, and holds in her hands a staff, which terminates in a lotus bud. Her assimilation to a mummified Isis-Aphrodite suggests that the deceased woman was a member of her cult. In the Tombs of Persephone No. 1 and No. 2 in Kom El-Shoqafa, Persephone is depicted in the central niche on the lower register, in the depiction of the myth of Persephone, where Persephone struggles with Hades, her arms flailing and wears a white garment of brides.

In the chora, in the tomb of the abduction of Persephone at Tuna El Gebel, Persephone is depicted on the central niche of the tomb, where the depiction of the myth of Persephone and she wears the saffron-colored garment of brides. Of course this scene is very unique to be depicted in the chora, which gives the assumption that the owner is an unmarried woman from a Greek family origin and not local elite, because there are no indications of any Egyptian reliefs in the scenes.

Priestesses and priests usually come from the elite class, and often depicted standing in profile across an altar in tombs. In Tuna El Gebel, house tomb No. 21, there is a special depiction of the tomb owner in an Egyptian style priestess wearing a leopard skin, and holds a papyrus roll, her head is bound with a ribbon and has two feathers, as she is either a *sem*-priest or a lector priest. In the Main tomb of Kom El-Shoqafa, in the burial chamber flanking the central niche, there are representation of the tomb owners as priests for both the male and the female in traditional Egyptian style.

For the depiction of tomb owners in traditional Egyptian garments, both males and females are depicted in the tombs of the chora. For the female depiction in Tuna El Gebel, house Tomb No. 21, antechamber on the lunette over the entrance door, mirror images of the tomb owner *Ta-sheryt*, depicted in a traditional Egyptian garment, with her hair loose, her hands are raised in praise or welcoming the visitor of the tomb. In the same tomb another depiction of the deceased woman led by a god and followed by her shadow, she wears a traditional Egyptian garment but her head is bound from above and she stands in profile.

For the male depiction of the tomb owner wearing a traditional garment usually depicted in the chora, for instance in Akhmim, the Bissing's Tomb of 1897, to the right of the depiction of the large figure of the tomb owner on the entrance wall, there is another depiction of him wearing a long garment. And on the right hand wall of the anteroom another depiction of the Tomb owner facing a procession of daemons wearing a long garment raising his hands in devotion. Also in tomb of Petubastis and Petosiris in the Dakhla oasis, there were depictions of the tomb owners in Egyptian garments during the afterlife and during their judgement of the dead.

Conclusion

The representational style of the tomb owners in Roman Egypt varied from one region to another, and even in the same tomb the Tomb Patron may be shown in different iconographical styles. Each region influenced the style of depiction of the tomb owner and its context. Funerary iconography indicates that the tomb owners preferred to be shown as the followers of a culture in which Egyptian and Graeco-Roman cultural traditions were equally expressed without any form of contradiction.

The tomb owners of the Roman period tombs were of a high to middle social status, they were either Greeks citizens or the elites of the local community. And this can be deducted because of their style, association with the cult, which was for the upper and elite classes only. Also, they were perhaps the only component of the community who could afford the construction and decoration of the tombs.

Most of the tomb patrons chose to be depicted on or adjacent to the entrance of their burials as to welcome their visitors, showing and stressing their identity, position, religious affiliation. They were also depicted on the central niches as gods like Isis-Aphrodite, Osiris, and Persephone, but this was used only by the Greeks, and to be depicted in different aspects of their lives and the hereafter on the remaining walls of their tombs.

In Alexandria and the chora, the tombs belonged to men, women, or both genders. They tomb patrons chose to be depicted in either classical style (the civic side) to cope with the trend of the Roman Empire and to show their high status, while they were also represented in traditional Egyptian style because they believed in ancient Egyptian religion for it has a promising afterlife. Hence, they depicted themselves with Egyptian gods to guarantee the afterlife and overcome the obstacles in their way to the afterlife. During the Roman period, the tomb patrons were careful to cope with the trend of portraying themselves in classical style, wearing the Roman *toga* or the Greek *chiton* and *himation*. Yet, they did follow ancient Egyptian religious beliefs. In many tombs, classical and Egyptian styles and beliefs were intermingled.

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