



The Distribution of the Book of the Dead Spells in the Roman Tombs at Qaret El-Muzawaqqa

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ABSTRACT

This research paper examined and mapped the distribution of Book of the Dead (BD) spells in the Roman tombs of Qaret El-Muzawwaqa. The Decorated Hill, or Qarat El-Muzawwaqa, was a unique archaeological site in the Dakhla Oasis of Egypt. Named after two elaborate tombs discovered in 1971 by Ahmed Fakhry, the site offered a rare glimpse into the fusion of Greek and Egyptian cultures during this period. The tombs of Petosiris and Petubastis featured stunning murals and zodiac ceilings, providing valuable insights into the funerary practices and beliefs of the time. As the only tombs open to visitors, they presented an opportunity for scholars to study the art, architecture, and religion of this transitional era. Furthermore, the surrounding area contained numerous unadorned family graves, offering a glimpse into the lives of ordinary people during this period. This paper aims to investigate and map the distribution of Book of the Dead spells in the Roman tombs of Qaret El-Muzawwaqa, specifically in the tombs of Petosiris and Petubastis, and to analyze the significance of these spells in relation to their location, vignette description, and function within the two tombs.

Introduction:

The Book of the Dead is a collection of spells and prayers that were believed to help guide the deceased through the afterlife in ancient Egypt. The modern title of the Book of the Dead was given by Lepsius in 1842 who interred the papyrus containing the spells alongside the deceased in the tomb. The Book of the Dead provides valuable insights into ancient Egyptian beliefs about death, the afterlife, and the role of magic in helping the deceased reach the afterlife. (Mosher, 1992,

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pp. 143-158). The Book of the Dead was not a single, uniform text but rather a compilation of spells that varied in content and arrangement depending on the period and location. The Book of the Dead was often written on papyrus rolls, giving them the appearance of a book, but they could also be found on tomb walls, mummy wrappings, and amulets (Lucarelli, 2012, p. 84). The spells were typically accompanied by vignettes, brief illustrations, or images that helped to convey the message of the text (Scalf & Lowry, 2017, pp. 11-12, 24). The origins of the Book of the Dead can be traced back to the Pyramid Texts of the Old Kingdom, which were inscribed on the burial chambers and the passages leading to the burial chambers and served as a precursor to the later mortuary spells (Munro, 2017, p. 49). The Book of the Dead proper began to take shape during the Thirteenth Dynasty, and its texts evolved over several centuries (Quirke, 2013, p. VIII).

Qarat al-Muzawwaqa* translates to “Decorated Hill” and acquired its name from two beautifully decorated tombs. The tombs of Petosiris and Petubastis are in the Dakhla Oasis of Egypt. They were rediscovered by the Egyptian archaeologist Ahmed Fakhry in 1971 and some have since been restored. These tombs are particularly interesting for their crossover between Graeco-Roman and ancient Egyptian styles. The walls of the tombs are decorated with spectacular colors and zodiac ceilings. The tombs are the only ones open to the public and are a valuable resource for the study of the Graeco-Roman period in Egypt. Their spectacular preservation allows modern researchers to analyze unique details of tomb painting, architecture, and funerary customs from an era bridging the ancient and classical worlds. Moreover, the hill is riddled with many unpainted family graves of middle-class families. The tomb of Petosiris contains spells 125, 144, and 162, while the tomb of Petubastis contains spells 17, 38, 54, 59, 89, 100, 145, 110, 138, and 125. The spells in the Book of the Dead are a collection of funerary texts that were used by the ancient Egyptians to help the deceased navigate the afterlife. The spells vary in their purpose, but they generally serve to protect the deceased from harm, help them achieve resurrection, and ensure their well-being in the afterlife.

This study has three main objectives. Firstly, it seeks to identify the specific Book of the Dead spells present in the Roman tombs of Qaret El-Muzawwaqa, particularly in the tombs of Petosiris and Petubastis. Secondly, it aims to map the distribution of these spells within the tombs, taking note of their specific locations. Finally, the study interprets the function of these spells within the context of the tombs, considering their placement and description. These objectives collectively contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter.

The literature review:

In the book “Visualizing the Afterlife in the Tombs of Graeco-Roman Egypt” by Marjorie Susan Venit, published by Cambridge University Press in 2016, the author provides a comprehensive study of the visual representations of the afterlife in the tombs of Graeco-Roman Egypt.

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in the study of Egyptian tombs from the Ptolemaic and Roman periods. One notable contribution to this field is the book authored by Prof. Dr. Abd al-Rahman Ali Abd al-Rahman, Professor of Egyptian Antiquities in the Ptolemaic and Roman Periods at the Faculty of Archaeology, Fayoum University, titled “The Egyptian Tombs in the Ptolemaic and Roman Period.” This comprehensive work was published in 2021 and provides an in-depth examination of various sepulchral structures built during these periods, with a particular focus on those featuring funerary or daily life scenes.

*A cone-shaped mountain called Qaret El-Muzawwaqa, also known as “the Decorated/Painted Rock Hill” or simply “El-Muzawwaqa,” is located about 6 km southwest of El-Qasr and about km northeast of Deir El-Hagar from the plain in the west of Dakhla (Fig. 1). The mountain’s slopes have been excavated with a variety of more or less spacious burial caves, only in two graves were such walls painted over the entire surface after they had been whitened and plastered with clay (Osing et al., 1982a, p. 70).

The study is basically divided into two major parts as follows: (1) Petosiris Tomb, and (2) Petubastis Tomb. The spells in each section are classified according to the order of their location within the tomb and their appearance.

1) Petosiris Tomb

One of the best-preserved painted tombs from Roman Egypt is the tomb of Petosiris in the Dakhla Oasis. The structure, dating back to the first century AD, consists of two rooms and three burial niches. Two of these niches are located in the north and east walls of the burial chamber, while the third is carved into the north wall of the antechamber. He appears in a classical pose in Petosiris' tomb. A defining characteristic of Roman Egyptian funerary art is the large classical model of the deceased, which is frequently depicted. This feature attests to the synthesis and blending of Egyptian and Hellenistic-Romano cultures and customs. El-Muzawqqa's cultures, traditions, funerary beliefs, and burial customs are similar to the "double style," "hybridization," and "biculturalism" between Egyptian religion and cultivated Hellenism (Castiglione, 1961, p. 209) (Riggs, Christina, 2006, p. 161). The Decorations inside the tomb: The figurative depictions combine Egyptian and Graeco-Roman design elements, but the only Greek-Roman elements are found in the ceilings and a sizable scene with Petosiris on the east wall of Room I. Only Petosiris is pictured and given a name in the tomb, even though the presence of three niches suggests that the rooms were designed for multiple burials. His full-length figure dominates the east wall of Room 1 on the left (north) side of the doorway leading to Room 2 (Omran, 2020). The BD spells are represented in two chambers 125,144,162 (Fig.2).

1.1 Spell BD 125 (Only the vignettes)

Location: Chamber I, on the South part of the East wall, Lower register. & Chamber II, on the South wall, Lower register.

Description: The vignette inside chamber I (Fig.3), A condensed but canonical version of the scene showing the Judgment is shown in the lower panel of the south section of the east wall. It resembles the scene on the north wall of Petubastis' tomb, which serves as the tomb's focal point, in terms of emphasis and content, but not in terms of style. Osiris also has an ankh and a *w3s*-scepter in front of him in addition to the flail and crook. His arms and, in this case, feet are not wrapped, unlike all the other mummified figures in the tomb. He is dressed in a stylishly decorated mummiform outfit, an elaborate atef crown, and a pectoral that is balanced on a golden mantle. Ammit, crowned with the two feathers of Ma'at as she is in the tomb of Petubastis, spits into a fiery cauldron to put out the flames, indicating that the deceased has escaped the fiery cauldron, in front of Osiris, who is seated on a shrine-like base. Ammit is depicted as completely leonine, having lost the composite form that has distinguished her since the early Nineteenth Dynasty. Thoth moves forward behind Ammit carrying a palette and a date palm branch with a notch, which in ancient Egypt was used to record the duration of the king's rule and, in this scene, stands in for the afterlife of the deceased (Venit, 2016, p. 166) (Wilkinson, 2003, p. 2017). On a smaller scale, the scene of Horus, Anubis, and Thoth weighing the deceased's heart is shown behind Thoth. He is squatting on a platform raised from the scale's central support, as seen on the south wall of the burial chamber of House-tomb 21 at Tuna el-Gebel. The *b3*-bird standing on a podium in the far left of the frame is making the happy sign with his hands up (Wilkinson, 1992, p. 27). The scale is irrelevant in this scene, as it is in the scene showing the Judgment in Petubastis' tomb because the figures are much smaller than Thoth, Ammit, and Osiris. *Other anomalies can be seen in the scene:* First, the scale's stand is shaped like the symbol of the lungs and windpipe that makes up the sema hieroglyph, which means unification (normally joining the signs for Upper and Lower Egypt). This is inappropriate for a private individual's tomb but is consistent with the common people's use of royal imagery during the Roman Period (Wilkinson, 1992, p. 81). Second, each pan of the scale holds a human heart rather than the heart, which would normally be weighed against the feather of Ma'at.

Additionally, in one of the tomb's most ingenious designs, a cantilevered groundline that is supported by an angle brace and on which Ma'at leads the deceased Petosiris provides a second "register" at the far left of the panel (Venit, 2016, p. 167).

The vignette inside chamber II (Fig.4), The deceased's judgment is depicted in the lower register in a scene that is as axially symmetric as the subject will allow, though it is reversed and a little more simplified than in Room I. With Thoth, in baboon form, crouching at the pivot, the heart is weighed by Horus at one pan of the scale and Anubis at the other (each pan again filled with a heart sign, as in Room I and in the tomb of Petubastis, though here, two more heart signs float in the field below). The Four Sons of Horus are in front of Osiris as he sits on a throne and waits for the ibis-headed Thoth, who records the decision, at the far left. Raised on a naos-like stand and positioned directly beneath the frontal vulture, Ammit (in lion form and donning a Ma'at-feather headdress as in Room I), becomes the tallest figure and the scene's focal point. Considering that there is no flaming cauldron here and Ammit does not put out the flames, it is a less conclusive scene than the one in Room I. Whether for variety, based on a different model, or on purpose, the Judgement scenes in Room I and Room II differ in almost every detail; only the irregularity of the heart weighed against another heart is consistent between the two scenes. In addition to the opposite direction of the narratives, the elements that make up each story are distinct. In Room II, Osiris is depicted in a more traditional Osirid stance; he carries only the traditional crook and flail, wears a net-like garment as opposed to the loop-decorated garment of Osiris in Room I, and his crown is rendered differently. In Room I, Horus and Anubis stand side-by-side, creating a symmetrical composition with the scale, whereas in Room II, they both process towards Osiris; and in Room II, Thoth writes on a board instead of a notched palm branch and assumes a forward-leaning posture, as opposed to his statuesque upright stance in Room I. In Room II, Ammit lacks the fiery cauldron into which she spits to extinguish the flames, but she still exudes ferocity: with her mouth open and tongue extended, she assumes a menacing appearance. Centered in the scene, taller and wider than any other figure in the scene, her imposing presence generates anxiety; the narrative is less optimistic because a verdict has not yet been rendered (Venit, 2016, pp. 178-179).
Function: The vignettes that accompany Spell 125 often depict the deceased being weighed in the balance against a feather, representing truth and justice. If the deceased's heart is lighter than the feather, they are deemed worthy of entering the afterlife. If their heart is heavier than the feather, they are devoured by a fearsome creature known as Ammit. From the researcher's point of view, the purpose of Spell 125 is to help the deceased ensure a successful transition to the afterlife. By making the declarations of innocence and being weighed in the balance, the deceased is demonstrating their worthiness to enter the realm of the gods. The vignettes that accompany the spell provide a visual representation of this process, and they help to make the spell more accessible to the deceased. To provide comfort and reassurance to the deceased. The Book of the Dead was intended to help the deceased navigate the afterlife and ensure a successful transition to the realm of the gods. Spell 125, in particular, is designed to provide comfort and reassurance to the deceased. The declarations of innocence and the images of the weighing of the heart can help to alleviate the deceased's fears and anxieties about the judgment process.

1.2 Spell BD 144 (Only the vignette is present.) (Fig.5)

Location: Chamber I, on the West part of the North wall, and the scene continues on the North part of the West wall, Upper register.

Description: Many of the elements of this spell can be found in the "Book of Two Ways" on early Middle Kingdom coffins from Bersha, even though the early Middle Kingdom sources for it in this form are unknown (Quirke, 2013, p. 224:229). Two daemons, one a male with a ram's head and the other a female, stand behind the sun barque and hold a double rope fastened to the boat's

stern in their left hands while holding knives in their right (Fig.6). Thoth is depicted on a plinth atop a lion that is crouching and has a face resembling that of a Hittite, possibly alluding to Osiris' "Bull with roaring voice" aspect³. A frontal Bes is painted on the north wall to the left of the niche behind Thoth, and a baboon with a reddish-brown bottom is painted behind him. The final two figures are in a protective position and are holding knives. A ram-headed god and goddess holding the rope fastened to the stern are both carrying knives⁴. Behind Thoth (apparently with a partially detached *Wdꜣt* eye in the forehead), there is a crouching lioness, a Bes-shaped god, and a monkey, both of whom are carrying knives. The sun god's ram-headed figure is recognizable for his nighttime journey, as is the snake coiling around him in this example from the Amduat (Venit, 2016, p. 172).

Function: The function of Spell 144 of the Book of the Dead is to help the deceased pass safely through the seven gates of the underworld. The spell names the gatekeepers of each gate and their attendants, and it instructs the deceased to offer them sacrifices and recite the spell in their presence. By doing this, the deceased will be able to gain the favor of the gatekeepers and pass through the gates without being harmed. The spell also mentions that it is more powerful than anything else that can be done for the deceased and that it will allow them to move freely in the sky, on earth, and in the god's land (The necropolis). This suggests that the spell was believed to have a very real and powerful effect on the deceased's afterlife journey.

1.3 Spell BD 162 (There is no text; only a vignette is Depicted.) (Fig.5)

Location: Chamber I, on the north part of the west wall, lower register.

Description: Compared to the upper registers, the lower registers of the two adjacent walls are better preserved and more typical of post-dynasties tomb architecture. From the tomb's entrance to its rear wall, a procession of deities can be seen in the scene. Six deities move forward carrying a linen bandage and a cup of natron for the embalming of the dead, starting to the right of the tomb's entrance. This scene is connected to the next by Anubis, who is leading the procession and turning back as if to urge it forwards while carrying natron and mummy bandages. The mummified Four Sons of Horus and a female deity with a headdress that suggests she is wearing the Eye of Re disguise are placed in front of Anubis. She honours the celestial cow Mehet-Weret, whose base is shaped like a naos and is crowned with a solar disc and feathers. A falcon with a flail, who is more frequently associated with Mehet-Weret and may serve as a symbol for "the west," perches on the mummy's chest (Fig.7). Ptah is depicted in an Upper-Egyptian-style shrine behind this arrangement, which is painted on the north wall. The shrine has a cobra-shaped, sun-disc-crowned sloping roof that is supported by two striped columns with papyrus capitals. The collocation of the four sons of Horus, the goddess with the *wdꜣt* eye in a solar disc as her head, and the striding cow, to which the mummy in the shrine below clearly attributes a funerary significance, is reminiscent of the vignettes to BD 162 ("Spell, Eine flame under the head of a transfigured person"), as they appear on the late Hypocephali in the middle of a register with a cow depicted in the same (partly with Ankh signs) (Osing *et al.*, 1982a). Therefore, a modified version of this group from BD 162 is possible. The new elements compared to the vignettes of BD162 (torch (?) in the goddess's right hand, shrine with mummy under the cow) could be reconciled with the intent and content of that BD spell (Venit, 2016, p. 171).

Function: The purpose of the spell was to maintain heat in the body of the deceased until his resurrection (Budge, 1909, p. 188). Spell BD 162 is an invocation to the Nine deities in Heliopolis. It never appeared in the papyri of the New Kingdom, but it was widely spread in the papyri dating back to the 26th Dynasty (Quirke, 2013, pp. 394-395).

³ For more about the "Bull with the roaring voice," see (Abt and Hornung, 2003,p.80).

⁴ For more information about this combination of protective daemons, see (Taylor, 2010,p.199,cat.no 94, and Fig.)

2) Petubastis Tomb (Fig.8)

One of the best-preserved decorated Roman tombs is the Petosiris tomb in the Dakhla Oasis. It is carved into the rock face of a ridge known as Qaret el-Muzawaqqa. Based on the approximation of the date of Demotic graffiti left in the nearby, similarly aligned tomb inscribed for a priest of Thoth by the name of Petubastis dates to the first century AD. Two rectangular rooms comprise the Petosiris tomb, the first of which has a body-length niche, and the second has two. Since the colours used in the representations of the tomb of Petubastis are so well preserved, much space is devoted to describing them. The scenes depict conventional funerary and cultic events, including the scene for weighing the heart and other spells from the Book of the Dead. Similar to the Petosiris tomb, the format features brilliantly coloured plates that confirm the exquisitely preserved representations (Leprohon, 1985, pp. 219:222). The one-room tomb of Petubastis contains portraits of the deceased as well as exquisite, severely damaged, colourful murals that combine Roman tradition with ancient Egyptian rituals (Grady, 2021). Like Petosiris and his male relatives at Tuna el-GebeI, Petubastis was a priest of Thoth.

2.1 Spell BD 54 (There is no text; only a vignette can be found.) (Fig.9)

Location: At the burial chamber, on the North part of the East wall, lower register.

Description: A man (priest) offers Petubastis a libation while he is perched on a stool inside the tomb (who has a censer and a sacrificial stand with loaves behind him) (Osing *et al.*, 1982a,p.75) (Venit, 2016, p. 160).

Function: Spell for giving breath to the deceased in the realm of the dead (Faulkner & Andrews, 2010, p. 65).

2.2 Spell BD 59 (There is no text; only a vignette can be found.) (Fig.10)

Location: At the burial chamber, on the North part of the East wall, lower register.

Description: Petubastis was sitting on a chair inside the tomb when a goddess emerged from the tree, offered him a drink from the vase, and held a sail as a representation of the fresh air. Additionally, there is an offering table with various offerings on it in front of the tree goddess (Venit, 2016, p. 160).

Function: **The main purpose or function of spell 59 from the Book of the Dead seems to be:**

- ✓ To allow the deceased to breathe and have access to air and water in the afterlife.
- ✓ The spell invokes the power of the goddess Nut's sycamore tree to request the essential elements of air and water for the deceased in the netherworld or necropolis. Breathing and having power over air and water would allow the deceased to come to life and flourish in the realm of the dead.

So, in summary, the spell's magical purpose is to activate the force of Nut's sycamore to provide air and water to the deceased, enabling them to breathe, come to life, and have power in the netherworld after death. This maintains balance and allows for a successful transition to the next phase of existence.

2.3 Spell BD 138 (There is no text present; only a vignette is depicted.) (Fig.11)

Location: At the burial chamber, on the North wall, lower register.

Description: In front of the *t3-wr* emblem (the indication to Abydos), the man (the deceased) extends his arms in adoration. The vignette shows the deceased standing alongside the Ram-gods as the god Horus (i.e., Soul-gods) (Osing *et al.*, 1982a, p. 78) (Venit, 2016, p. 162).

Function: The dead man's recitation of this Spell gave him the ability to enter the Osiris kingdom at Abydos, join the god's followers, and identify himself with Horus, Osiris' son, on the day of the

great ceremony commemorating the return of the dead man's body by erecting the Djed pillar and placing the god's head atop it (Budge, 1909, pp. 175-176).

2.4 Spell BD 125 (Fig.12)

Location: At the burial chamber, on the North wall, Middle register.

Function: **The main function and purpose of Spell 125** in the ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead is to declare the deceased's innocence and morality before entering the afterlife. There are a few key purposes it served:

- Prove moral purity - By reciting a list of sins/crimes they did not commit; the deceased demonstrates they led a virtuous life worthy of eternal life.
- Pass a test of morality - Spell 125 is essentially an ethical test the soul must pass to gain entry to the afterlife. Reciting it correctly proves their morality.
- Demonstrate ritual knowledge - The declarations of innocence and the testing of ritual names show the deceased learned proper funerary rituals for navigating the afterlife.
- Gain entry to the Hall of Judgment - Passing the negative confession and knowledge test allows the soul admission to be judged by Osiris and the 42 assessor gods, a critical step in the afterlife journey.
- Establish worthiness - The spell affirms the soul's worthiness and preparedness to be evaluated for the afterlife, as only the pure and righteous were meant to enjoy eternity.

So, in summary, the main purpose of Spell 125 was to ritually purify the soul through declarations of innocence, prove moral worthiness, demonstrate ritual knowledge, gain judgment entry, and establish readiness for the eternal afterlife. It was a necessary step in the soul's successful passage into the next world. The main function and purpose of Spell 125 in the ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead is to declare the deceased's innocence and morality before entering the afterlife. It was a necessary step in the soul's successful passage into the next world.

2.5 Spell BD 17 (There is no text; only a vignette is present.) (Fig.13)

Location: At the burial chamber, on the west wall (The north part of the west wall), lower register.

Description: Petubastis worships the jackal-pulled solar bark (sun boat). In addition, the falcon-headed sun god is crouching in the bark, surrounded by a ring of stars that represents the sun disc. There is also a man carrying a long pole at the bow and stern, with the red crown of Lower Egypt at the bow and the white crown of Upper Egypt at the stern. At the very front of the bow stands a table of offerings (Fig.13.1). A mummy-shaped Osiris led the funeral procession, followed by Isis, Nephthys, Anubis, and Horus (Fig.13.2) (Osing *et al.*, 1982, p. 77).

Function:

- Affirmation of identity with the gods - By equating himself with various creator gods like Ra, Osiris, and Thoth, the deceased establishes his divine nature and knowledge. This confirmation of his spiritual identity is crucial for rebirth.
- Demonstrating esoteric wisdom - The deceased proves he possesses secret knowledge of the gods' mystical names, aspects, and myths. This sacred wisdom aids his acceptance into the afterlife.
- Gaining magical protection - Through identifying with the gods' regenerative powers, the deceased acquires magical protection from demonic forces in the afterlife. The spell invokes this defense.
- Ritual guidance - Details in the text allude to funerary rituals like mummification and the Opening of the Mouth ceremony. The spell guides the performance of these rites.
- Sustaining transition to the afterlife - Reciting the long, complex spell over days of funeral rituals helps sustain the deceased's spirit through the transition.

- Regenerating the soul - By synthesizing myth, magic, and ritual, the spell facilitates the renewal of the deceased's soul and his rebirth into the afterlife.
- Uniting with cosmic forces - Equating the deceased with gods like Ra and Osiris connects him to the regenerative cycles of the sun and the afterlife.

So, in summary, spell 17 affirmed the deceased's identity, demonstrated his wisdom, invoked protection, guided funeral rituals, sustained his spirit, regenerated his soul, and unified him with cosmic forces - all to ensure his successful rebirth into the eternal afterlife.

2.7 Spell BD 145 (Only a vignette is illustrated; there is no accompanying text.) (Fig.14)

Location: At the burial chamber, on the West wall, Upper register.

Description: Petubastis was in an adoration position in front of a gate that was being guarded by a god with a falcon head brandishing two knives (Osing *et al.*, 1982a, p. 77) (Venit, 2016, p. 164).

Function: some key functions of spell 145 of the Book of the Dead are:

- To ensure safe passage for the deceased through the underworld to reach Osiris. The spell provides the names and descriptions needed to pass each gateway.
- To purify the deceased by passing the gateways. The deceased undertake rituals of purification like washing and anointing before each gateway.
- To grant the deceased new transfigured status after passing all the gateways. The deceased takes on new powers and abilities.
- To allow the deceased to be justified/vindicated against enemies. The spell mentions overthrowing enemies and ferrying them to the slaughterhouse.
- To revive and give new life to Osiris, allowing the deceased to join him. The spell includes offerings made to Osiris.
- To demonstrate knowledge of the underworld geography, deities, and rituals to gain access to Osiris's realm.
- To provide magical protection by knowing the secret names and natures of the gateways and guardians.
- To identify the deceased with gods like Horus and Thoth to take on their abilities.

So, in summary, the spell enables the purified and vindicated deceased to safely navigate the underworld, gain new abilities and status, revive Osiris, and join him eternally in the netherworld. Reciting the spell was thought to help make this possible through its magical knowledge.

2.6 Spell BD 100 (No text is written, only a vignette.) (Fig.15)

Location: At the burial chamber, on the South part of the West wall, Upper register.

Description: In the opening scene, Petubastis pours a drink in front of a sacrificial stand with bread loaves as the deceased steers a solar boat with the Dd pillar to the west. The second one involved travelling east with God Thoth and the phoenix. Pour some water out of a vase in front of a man (perhaps Petubastis?) (Osing *et al.*, 1982a, p. 77).

Function: The main purpose or function of spell 100 from the Book of the Dead seems to be:

- To enable and empower the deceased to join the solar barque of Ra each day in the afterlife.
- The spell allows the deceased to claim they have helped facilitate the cycles of the sun and other Egyptian gods. By demonstrating this ritual knowledge and allegiance, the deceased makes themselves worthy to ride with Ra on his sun boat.
- The ultimate aim is to allow the deceased to take part in the regenerative journey of the sun god across the sky and through the underworld each day. This would allow the deceased to be continually reborn, ensuring an eternal afterlife.

- The spell rejects and blocks enemies like the serpent Apep, removing obstacles to the deceased joining the sun god. The deceased aligns their well-being with the Eye of Ra, a symbol of the sun's power.
- Through reciting spell 100, the deceased magically enables their spiritual transformation into a perfected spirit or *Akh*, able to move freely with Ra and across cosmic realms.

So, in essence, this spell serves as a kind of passport or permit for the deceased's soul, demonstrating they have the ritual knowledge and magical prowess to join the cycles of the sun god and be reborn eternally.

2.8 Spell BD 110 (Only the vignette is present.) (Fig.16)

Location: At the burial chamber, on the West wall, lower register.

Description: The scene depicts the man harvesting the corn plant. In his left hand, he holds a sickle, whereas his right hand is used to stabilize the plant (Osing *et al.*, 1982a, p.77) (Venit, 2016, p. 163).

Function: The main purpose of this spell appears to be:

- To empower and equip the deceased to successfully navigate the transitional realm of the Duat (underworld) and reach the fertile afterlife fields and regions of abundant rebirth.
- Allowing the deceased to take on the abilities and characteristics of gods like Horus and Osiris in order to survive dangers and challenges in the journey through the afterlife. This includes invoking mythological events and identifying the deceased with Horus.
- Granting magical knowledge and power to the deceased, such as knowing the secret names of gods and spirits, understanding the geography of the Marsh of Offerings, and claiming authority and ability while in this mystical underworld region.
- Affirming the deceased has regained vital capabilities like eating, drinking, sensing, plowing, reaping, and sexual reproduction - symbols of regaining eternal life.
- Depicting the Duat as containing abundant fertility, waterways, greenery, and agricultural offerings, reflecting the Egyptian vision of a vibrant afterlife journey.
- Calling upon protective goddesses and gods to guard the deceased from harm and assist in reaching the afterlife successfully.
- Guiding the deceased's boat to moor safely so he may join the gods and be accepted into the afterlife.

2.9 Spell BD 89 (There is no text; only a vignette is available.) (Fig.17)

Location: At the burial chamber, on the West wall, lower register.

Description: Mummy lying in a shrine with a ba bird above it. In front of the shrine, there is an offering table) (Osing *et al.*, 1982a, p. 77).

Function: The deceased thought he could force his Ba to travel from anywhere and reunite with his body by reciting this spell over a golden soul encrusted with precious stones and placed on the breast of his mummy. Once the *ba* had returned, the body could not crumble and perish. The souls of the deceased were reunited at Heliopolis (Budge, 1909, p. 146).

2.10 Spell BD 38 (There is no text; only a vignette is present.) (Fig.18)

Location: At the burial chamber, on the south part of the west wall, lower register (Fig.9).

Description: Petubastis (The deceased), seated on a chair and holding the symbol for "air" (a "sail") in his hand, receives a drink from a jug (Venit, 2016, p. 164) (Osing *et al.*, 1982a, p. 77).

Function: The Function: The spells of this magic were designed to furnish the departed with a breathable atmosphere in the realm beyond, as denoted by its nomenclature. The individual in

question commonly aligns himself with Tem, the deity associated with wind and the origin of atmospheric gases, in manifestation. The analogy drawn between the countenance of the departed individual upon their arrival in the Otherworld during the early hours of the day and the blossoming of the "lily of green felspar" at daybreak, catalysed by the refreshing breeze of the dawn, is particularly fitting (Budge, 1909, pp. 114-115).

Results and discussion:

After this enumeration of the distribution of the Book of the Dead spells in the Roman tombs at Qaret El-Muzawaqqa, certain points are determined as follows.

Firstly, the tombs of Petosiris and Petubastis differ in their layout, with Petosiris having two rooms and Petubastis having only one. Additionally, the entrance to Petosiris' tomb opens through its south wall, while Petubastis' tomb opens through its south wall as well.

Secondly, the number of Book of the Dead spells in each tomb varies, with Petosiris containing 10 spells and Petubastis containing 4. Furthermore, the arrangement of the spells in Petosiris' tomb is unique, with some being placed in a different order than in Petubastis'.

Thirdly, the design of the niches in the two tombs differs significantly. In Petosiris', the niches are quadrilateral in shape and are higher than those in Petubastis'. They are also designed to form a bed for the deceased, whereas in Petubastis', they serve as shelves.

Fourthly, both tombs have walls that are divided into two registers, but the way the walls are treated differs between the two tombs. In Petosiris', the walls of Room I are treated as a single unit, with the narrative flowing from one wall to the next. Conversely, each wall in Room I of Petubastis' tomb is treated as a separate unit, with its own distinct narrative.

Lastly, the treatment of the Judgement scene differs between the two tombs. In Petosiris', the Judgement scene is located on the north wall of Room I and serves as the focal point of the tomb. On the other hand, in Petubastis', the Judgement scene is situated on the south section of the east wall and is much smaller and less prominent.

It is worth mentioning that the Judgment Scene is a recurring motif in Egyptian tomb decoration, aiming to guide and support the deceased during their afterlife journey. In Chamber I of Petosiris' tomb, a condensed but canonical version of the Judgment Scene can be found, featuring all the necessary components, including Osiris, the god of the underworld, sitting enthroned and holding various symbols, the deceased's heart being weighed against the feather of Ma'at, and Thoth recording the outcome. Interestingly, Chamber II of Petosiris' tomb features a reversed and somewhat simplified rendition of the Judgment Scene, lacking the fiery cauldron where Ammit spits to extinguish the flames. This variation implies that the deceased in Chamber II has yet to receive a verdict, leaving their destiny uncertain.

Other differences between the two scenes include:

- ⇒ Osiris is posed in a more traditional Osirid position in Chamber II.
- ⇒ Osiris wears a net-shroud-like garment in Chamber II, in contrast to the loop-decorated garment he wears in Chamber I.
- ⇒ Horus and Anubis stand back-to-back creating a symmetrical composition with the scale in Chamber I, whereas they both process toward Osiris in Chamber II.
- ⇒ Thoth writes upon a board instead of on a notched palm branch in Chamber II.
- ⇒ Ammit is taller and of greater breadth than any other figure in the scene in Chamber II, creating a more menacing presence.

Overall, the Judgment Scene in Chamber II is more ambiguous and less sanguine than the scene in Chamber I. This suggests that the deceased in Chamber II has not yet completed their afterlife journey and that their fate is still undecided. There are a few possible interpretations of the differences between the Judgment Scenes in Chamber I and Chamber II. One possibility is that the

two scenes represent different stages of the afterlife journey. The scene in Chamber I could represent the final judgment, after which the deceased's fate is sealed. The scene in Chamber II, on the other hand, could represent an earlier stage in the afterlife journey, when the deceased is still undergoing trials and tribulations. Another possibility is that the two scenes are intended to convey different messages about the afterlife. The scene in Chamber I could be seen as a message of hope and reassurance, suggesting that the deceased will ultimately be rewarded for their good deeds. The scene in Chamber II, on the other hand, could be seen as a message of caution, warning the deceased that they must still face challenges and overcome obstacles before they can achieve eternal life. It is also possible that the differences between the two scenes are simply due to the different artists who created them. Each artist may have had their own unique vision of the afterlife, and this may be reflected in the way they depicted the Judgment Scene. Ultimately, the meaning of the differences between the Judgment Scenes in Chamber I and Chamber II is open to interpretation. However, it is clear that these scenes are important elements of the tomb's decorative program, and that they were intended to provide the deceased with guidance and support on their afterlife journey.

During the time from the late period and the End of the Roman period, the Book of the Dead was still evolving, and new spells and versions were being created. This was a time of great change and upheaval in Egypt, with the country facing threats from outside invaders and internal strife. As a result, the Book of the Dead became even more important to the Egyptians, as it offered the promise of eternal life in the afterlife. Many of the spells and prayers in the Book of the Dead were intended to protect the deceased from harm and ensure their safe passage into the afterlife. These spells and prayers were often accompanied by vivid illustrations of the underworld, deities, and demons, which helped to convey the message of the texts. The Book of the Dead was not just limited to royalty and nobility but was also used by ordinary people who could afford it. This indicates that the desire for eternal life was not limited to the wealthy and powerful but was a deep-seated desire among all levels of Egyptian society.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, the Book of the Dead is a rich and complex text that provides valuable insights into ancient Egyptian beliefs about death and the afterlife. Through its various spells and illustrations, we see a people who believed in the importance of preserving the physical body, ensuring safe passage into the afterlife, and securing a positive judgment from the gods. We also see a strong emphasis on individual morality and the need for the deceased to demonstrate their worthiness through ritual knowledge and declarations of innocence. The Book of the Dead serves as a window into the religious and cultural practices of ancient Egypt, offering us a glimpse into a world where magic and religion were deeply intertwined. Its significance goes beyond its role as a guidebook for the deceased, as it also reveals much about the lives and beliefs of those who created and used it. Despite being over three thousand years old, the Book of the Dead remains relevant today, serving as a reminder of the universal human desire to transcend mortality and achieve immortality. Its themes of hope, faith, and the quest for eternal life continue to resonate with people around the world, making it a timeless work that continues to inspire and captivate audiences. As we continue to study and learn more about the Book of the Dead, we gain a deeper appreciation for the complexity and beauty of ancient Egyptian culture, and we are reminded of the enduring power of human imagination and creativity. Whether seen as a historical artifact, a literary masterpiece, or a spiritual guide, the Book of the Dead remains an important part of our shared cultural heritage, offering insights and inspiration for generations to come.

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Figures

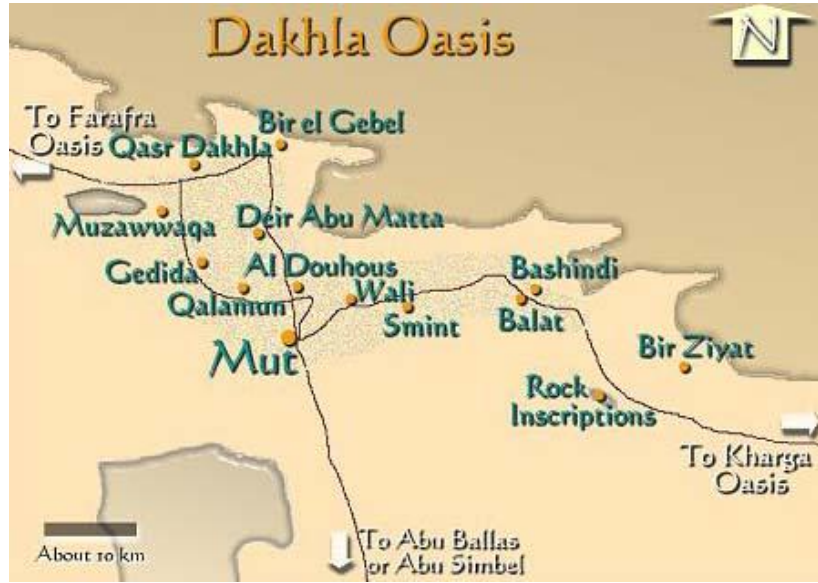


Fig.1: A map of Dakhla Oasis with the location of Qaret El-Muzawwaqa marked.

After: [digital image]. Retrieved from < <https://www.selectegypt.com/egypt/dakhla-oasis-maps.html> >

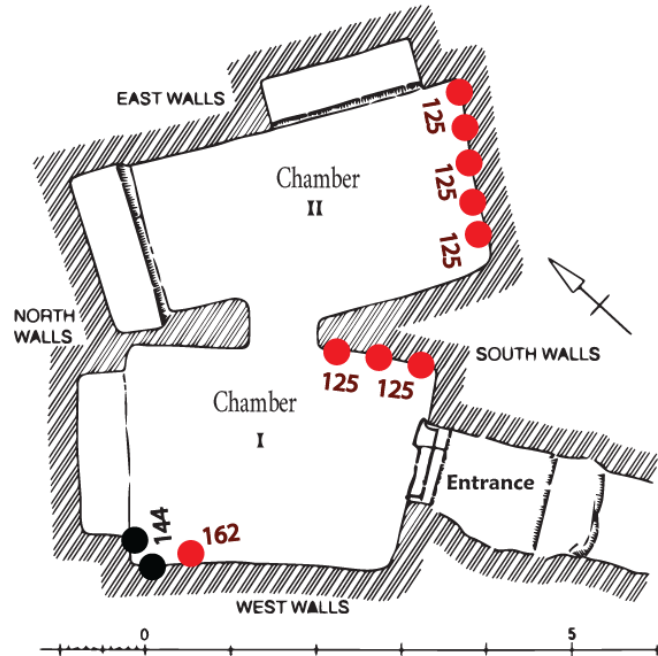


Fig.2: The layout of Petosiris' tomb in the Dakhla Oasis's el-Muzawaqqa village and the locations of the Book of the Dead spells.

After: Riggs, C. (2006). *The beautiful burial in Roman Egypt: Art, identity, and funerary religion*. Oxford studies ancient culture and representation. Oxford University Press. Retrieved from < <http://www.myilibrary.com?id=75816> > (Accessed: 9 April 2023). fig.75.



Fig.3: Chamber I, the South part of the East wall, Lower register.

After: Venit, M.S. (2016) *Visualizing the Afterlife in the Tombs of Graeco-Roman Egypt*, 1st ed, New York: Cambridge University Press. Retrieved from <<https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107256576>>.Pl. XXVII



Fig.4: Chamber II, the South wall, Lower register.

After: Venit, M.S. (2016) *Visualizing the Afterlife in the Tombs of Graeco-Roman Egypt*. 1st edn. New York: Cambridge University Press. Retrieved from <<https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107256576>>. fig.19.5



Fig. 5: Chamber I, the North wall.

After: Venit, M.S. (2016) *Visualizing the Afterlife in the Tombs of Graeco-Roman Egypt*. 1st edn. New York: Cambridge University Press. Retrieved from < <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107256576> >. fig.5.13



Fig .6.

Chamber I, on the West part of the North wall (spell BD 144).

After: Venit, M.S. (2016) *Visualizing the Afterlife in the Tombs of Graeco-Roman Egypt*. 1st edn. New York: Cambridge University Press. Retrieved from < <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107256576> >. fig.5.13



Fig.7: The celestial cow Mehet-Weret.

After: Venit, M.S. (2016) *Visualizing the Afterlife in the Tombs of Graeco-Roman Egypt*. 1st edn. New York: Cambridge University Press. Retrieved from < <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107256576> >. fig.5.14

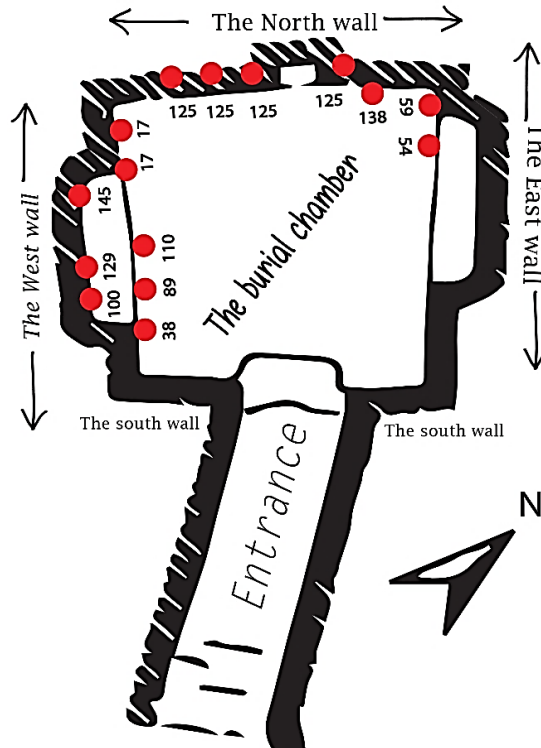


Fig.8: The layout of Petubastis' tomb in the Dakhla Oasis's el-Muzawaqqa village and the locations of the Book of the Dead spells.

After: Ali, M., Shawki, H., & Mahmoud, H. M. (2020). Material characterization and restoration of mural paintings of El-Muzzawaka Tombs, Dakhla Oases, Egypt. *Ge-Conservación*, 18, 92-107. fig.1.



Fig.9: The North part of the East wall, lower register (BD 54).

After: Osing, J., Moursi, M., Arnold, D., Neugebauer, O., Parker, R., Pingree, D., & Nur-el-Din, M. (1982). *Denkmäler der Oase Dachla. Aus dem Nachlass von Ahmed Fakhry, Archäologische Veröffentlichungen, 28. Tafel.21B*



Fig.10: The North part of the East wall, lower register (BD 59).

After: Osing, J., Moursi, M., Arnold, D., Neugebauer, O., Parker, R., Pingree, D., & Nur-el-Din, M. (1982b). *Denkmäler der Oase Dachla. Aus dem Nachlass von Ahmed Fakhry, Archäologische Veröffentlichungen, 28. Tafel.21D*



Fig.11: (BD 138), North wall, Lower register.

After: Osing, J., Moursi, M., Arnold, D., Neugebauer, O., Parker, R., Pingree, D., & Nur-el-Din, M. (1982b). *Denkmäler der Oase Dachla. Aus dem Nachlass von Ahmed Fakhry, Archäologische Veröffentlichungen, 28. Tafel.21B*

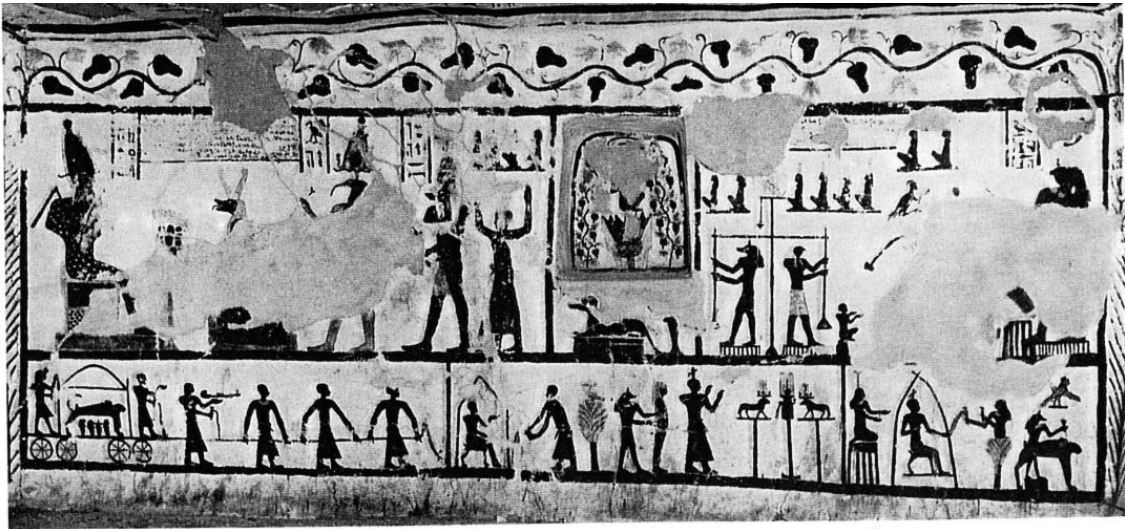


Fig.12: The burial chamber of Petubastis, on the North wall, Middle register (Spell BD 125).
After: Osing, J., Moursi, M., Arnold, D., Neugebauer, O., Parker, R., Pingree, D., & Nur-el-Din, M. (1982b).
Denkmäler der Oase Dachla. *Aus dem Nachlass von Ahmed Fakhry, Archäologische Veröffentlichungen*, 28. Tafel.21B

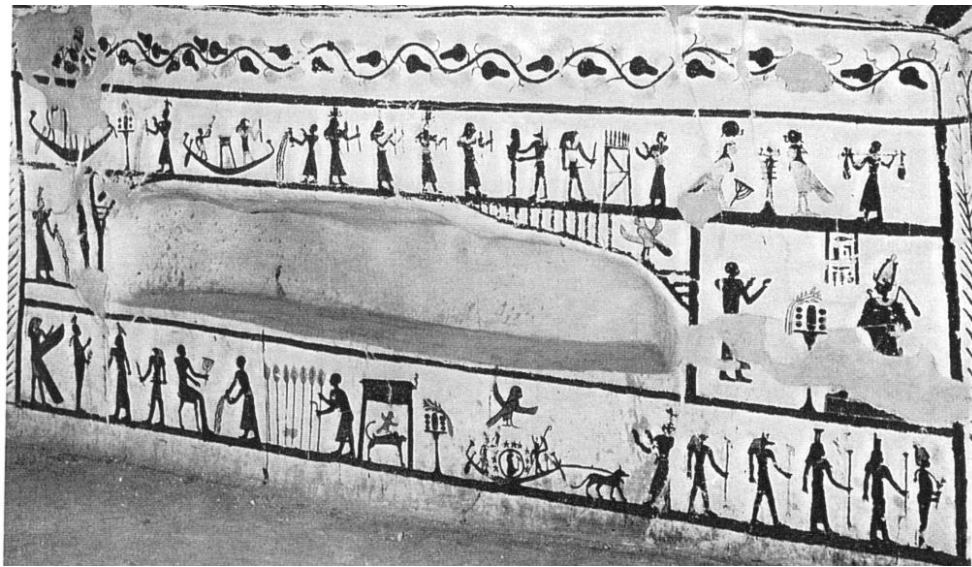


Fig.13: The north part of the west wall, lower register (Spell BD 17).
After: Osing, J., Moursi, M., Arnold, D., Neugebauer, O., Parker, R., Pingree, D., & Nur-el-Din, M. (1982).
Denkmäler der Oase Dachla. *Aus dem Nachlass von Ahmed Fakhry, Archäologische Veröffentlichungen*, 28. Table 21C.

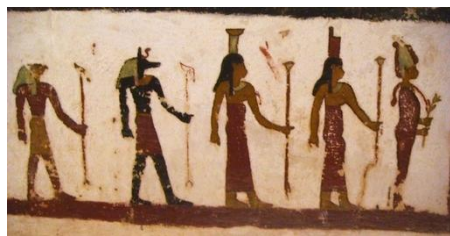


Fig.13.1



Fig.13.2



Fig.14: (BD 145), West wall, Upper register.

After: Osing, J., Moursi, M., Arnold, D., Neugebauer, O., Parker, R., Pingree, D., & Nur-el-Din, M. (1982b). Denkmäler der Oase Dachla. *Aus dem Nachlass von Ahmed Fakhry, Archäologische Veröffentlichungen*, 28.

Tafel.21C



Fig.15: (BD100 = BD 129), the South part of the West wall, Upper register.

After: Osing, J., Moursi, M., Arnold, D., Neugebauer, O., Parker, R., Pingree, D., & Nur-el-Din, M. (1982b). Denkmäler der Oase Dachla. *Aus dem Nachlass von Ahmed Fakhry, Archäologische Veröffentlichungen*, 28.

Tafel.21C



Fig.16: (BD 110), West wall, Lower register.

After: Osing, J., Moursi, M., Arnold, D., Neugebauer, O., Parker, R., Pingree, D., & Nur-el-Din, M. (1982b). Denkmäler der Oase Dachla. *Aus dem Nachlass von Ahmed Fakhry, Archäologische Veröffentlichungen*, 28.

Tafel.21C



Fig.17: (BD 89), East wall, lower register.

After: Osing, J., Moursi, M., Arnold, D., Neugebauer, O., Parker, R., Pingree, D., & Nur-el-Din, M. (1982b). Denkmäler der Oase Dachla. *Aus dem Nachlass von Ahmed Fakhry, Archäologische Veröffentlichungen*, 28. Tafel.21C



Fig.10: The south part of the west wall, lower register (BD 38).

After: Osing, J., Moursi, M., Arnold, D., Neugebauer, O., Parker, R., Pingree, D., & Nur-el-Din, M. (1982). Denkmäler der Oase Dachla. *Aus dem Nachlass von Ahmed Fakhry, Archäologische Veröffentlichungen*, 28. Tafel.21C