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Christina Riggs

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Archaism and Artistic Sources in Roman Egypt
The Coffins of the Soter Family and the Temple of Deir el-Medina

CHRISTINA RIGGS

In memoriam Dominic Montserrat

Archaism can be defined as the intentional revival and reworking of artistic forms and styles from the past.[1] In both the visual arts and in language, archaism is characteristic of ancient Egypt, whose cultural expressions were essentially conservative. Archaism encompasses both revival and survival, although in Egyptological usage, the term generally presupposes a time gap between the archaism and its inspiration.[2] In identifying archaism, meaning and purposefulness are as significant as the length of time separating the reference and the referent, if not more so.[3]

Archaism is also strongly linked to Egyptian concepts of legitimacy and order. The ancient Egyptians were well aware of their past, often constructing it as perfected and ideal in contrast to the present.[4] Periods marked by political and cultural insecurity were thus followed by revivals of earlier visual forms, as in the early New Kingdom and the 26th dynasty. In Roman Egypt, archaism may be a similar response to the impact of Greek and Roman culture. What survives, or is revived, in Roman Egypt also points to the restricted resources, and changing role, of

1 R. Morkot, 'Archaism and Innovation in Art from the New Kingdom to the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty', in W. J. Tait (ed.), *"Never Had the Like Occurred": Egypt's View of its Past*, London, 2003, p. 79-99; H. Brunner, 'Archaismus', in *LÄ* I, col. 386-395; H. Brunner, 'Zum Verständnis der archaisierenden Tendenz in der ägyptischen Spätzeit', *Saeculum* 21, 1970, p. 151-162.

2 W. Davis, 'Archaism and Modernism in the Reliefs of Hesy-Ra', in W. J. Tait (ed.), *"Never Had the Like Occurred": Egypt's View of its Past*, London, 2003, p. 31-60. Elsewhere, Bothmer (*Egyptian Sculpture of the Late Period*, Brooklyn, 1960, p. xxxvii-xxxviii) coined the terms 'archaizing' and 'archaistic' to distinguish, respectively, revivals of the distant and not-so-distant past; these were later replaced by 'archaism' and 'neo-archaism' (see *id.*, *Egyptian Art. Selected Writings of Bernard V. Bothmer*, New York, 2004, index entries on p. 515). Bothmer's criteria were somewhat vague, and the distinction has not been widely adopted.

3 Thus also J. Baines, 'Ancient Egyptian Concepts and Uses of the Past: 3rd to 2nd Millennium BC Evidence', in R. Layton (ed.), *Who Needs the Past? Indigenous Values and Archaeology*, London, New York, 1994, p. 131-149.

4 *Ibid,* p. 139-140.

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the Egyptian temple sphere.[5] Those scribes, artists, and craftspeople who practised traditional forms of writing and visual representation had fewer and fewer outlets in which to do so.

The question of archaism relates to a larger question in the study of Egyptian visual arts: what sources did artists use for their work? Egyptologists have comparatively little information about how paintings and reliefs were designed, such as who made essential decisions about form, content, and the placement of scenes and inscriptions.[6] In temple decoration, priests and scribes must have been closely involved with such decision-making. To some extent, the same must be true for highly decorated objects like coffins, if one assumes that many artists did not themselves possess the necessary knowledge to select and compose texts and iconography.

The 'Soter group' of coffins and shrouds is characterized by its conservative, archaistic appearance.[7] Specific dates given for the births and deaths of some family members date the entire group to c. AD 90–140. In addition to the group's conventional Egyptian artistic forms, the shape of the coffins is derived from Late Period coffins also found on the west bank of Thebes.[8] Similarly, the hieroglyphic texts on the coffins and shrouds are copied from and inspired by much earlier funerary compositions. Soter himself was a local official, known as an *archon,* and a similar coffin belongs to a man named Imhotep who, though not related to Soter, held several priestly titles in the area.[9] Hence the group of burials belong to a local elite connected to civic and religious offices in the region, and they model a noticeably Egyptian identity in the mortuary sphere of Roman Thebes.

Within the Soter group, Soter's own coffin is distinctive, with unique elements like the representation of the four winds.[10] The lid and base of his coffin are decorated by the same artist's hand, with characteristic outlines, shapes, and colouring that stand out among other coffins of the group. It is possible that the modern impression of him as a patriarch is not unjustified, and that his own burial, which included a shroud and a gilded mummy, was accorded special attention.[11] Among the coffins of his children, those of Petamenophis Ammonios[12] and his

5 Best discussion: D. Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt. Assimilation and Resistance*, Princeton, 1998.

6 For artists and craftsmen in general, see R. Drenkhahn, 'Artisans and Artists in Pharaonic Egypt', in J. M. Sasson (ed.), *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*, New York, I, 1995, p. 331-343; *id.*, *Die Handwerker und ihre Tätigkeit im Alten Ägypten*, Wiesbaden, 1976.

7 Chr. Riggs, *The Beautiful Burial in Roman Egypt: Art, Identity, and Funerary Religion*, Oxford, 2005 (afterwards Riggs, *The Beautiful Burial*), p. 182-205. For the family, see Fr.-R. Herbin, *Padiimenipet fils de Sôter. Histoire d'une famille dans l'Égypte romaine*, Paris, 2002; K. Van Landuyt, 'The Soter Family: Genealogy and Onomastics', in S. Vleeming (ed.), *Hundred-Gated Thebes. Acts of a Colloquium on Thebes and the Theban Area in the Graeco-Roman Period*, Leiden, 1995, p. 69-82.

8 Chr. Riggs, 'The Egyptian Funerary Tradition at Thebes in the Roman Period', in N. Strudwick, J. H. Taylor (eds), *The Theban Necropolis: Past, Present, Future*, London, 2003, p. 193-194.

9 C. Beinlich-Seeber, 'Ein römerzeitlichen Sargfragment in Marseille', in A. Brodbeck (ed.), *Ein ägyptischen Glasperlenspiel. Ägyptologische Beiträge für Erik Hornung aus seinem Schülerkreis*, Berlin, 1998, p. 9-40.

10 British Museum EA 6705: 213.0 cm L.; see Herbin, *op. cit.,* p. 11, fig. 8 and p. 12, figs. 9-10; see also Riggs, *The Beautiful Burial,* p. 280-281 (no. 77), with further references.

11 F. Henniker, *Notes during a Visit to Egypt, Nubia, the Oasis Boeris, Mount Sinai, and Jerusalem*, London, 1824, p. 139, observed that '…the body was enveloped in thirty linen wrappers, the hands and mouth gilt.' According to d'Athanasi, Henniker unwrapped the mummy and 'threw it into the Nile' while en route back to Cairo: G. d'Athanasi, *A Brief Account of the Researches and Discoveries in Upper Egypt Made under the Direction of Henry Salt, Esq.*, London, 1836, p. 51. The shroud is British Museum EA 6705 a, 235.0 cm L.; see Riggs, *The Beautiful Burial,* p. 280-282 (no. 77); *id.*, 'The Egyptian Funerary Tradition at Thebes' (*op. cit.*), pl. 105.

12 Louvre E 13016 base, 13048 lid: 200.0 cm L.; see Herbin, *op. cit.;* see also Riggs, *The Beautiful Burial,* p. 282-283 (no. 81), with further references, and M.-Fr. Aubert and R. Cortopassi, *Portraits de l'Égypte romaine*, Paris, 1998, p. 34-39.

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sister Sensaos[13] are intriguingly identical in their draughtsmanship, painting, and general layout, suggesting that they were decorated by the same artist even though Sensaos died seven years earlier than Petamenophis, in AD 109. The coffins of Petamenophis Ammonios and another sister, Kleopatra,[14] are not by the same hand, but both coffins depict Amenhotep, son of Hapu and Imhotep on their head ends, exceptionally among the Soter group.

This study identifies a potential, specific source for some distinctive scenes on three of the above-mentioned coffins belonging to members of the Soter family: the Ptolemaic temple of Hathor at Deir el-Medina. In particular, the temple pronaos and the southern chapel, which were decorated under Ptolemy VI Philometor (180-145 BC), appear to have been an important artistic source for the coffins of the Soter group.[15] At the very least, aspects of the coffin and temple decoration are indebted to similar representational models and ideas.

THE FOUR WINDS ON THE COFFIN OF SOTER

Like all the coffins linked to members of his family, the wooden coffin of Soter consists of a flat base and an arched lid. Four posts, one at each corner of the lid, slot into the corresponding corners of the base, and wooden tenons, regularly spaced along the sides, secure the lid and base. Corner-post coffins, called *qrsw,* symbolize the sky arching over the deceased, supported by pillars at the four corners of the earth.[16]

The arched portion of Soter's coffin lid, which springs from the long sides, is divided into two registers, one on either side of a vertically-oriented column of inscription on the spine of the lid. On the left side of the coffin, the register depicts a judgement scene; on the right side, a procession of deities fills the space. Both of these scenes are discussed in more detail below [fig. 1]. The inside of the lid is filled by the goddess Nut, the zodiac, and the hours of the day and night.[17]

13 Leiden, Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, M 75: 184.0 cm L.; see Riggs, *The Beautiful Burial,* p. 280 (no. 76), with further references, and see M. J. Raven and W. K. Taconis, *Egyptian Mummies. Radiological Atlas of the Collections in the National Museum of Antiquities in Leiden*, Turnhout, 2005, p. 179-183 for the associated mummy and shroud.

14 British Museum EA 6706: 183.0 cm L.; see Herbin, *op. cit.,* p. 13, fig. 12 and p. 14, figs. 13-14; Riggs, *The Beautiful Burial,* p. 281 (no. 78), with further references.

15 PM II², 401-407; P. du Bourguet, L. Gabolde, *Le temple de Deir al-Médîna*, Cairo, 2002 (afterwards *Deir el-Médînâ*); D. Arnold, *Temples of the Last Pharaohs*, New York, Oxford, 1999, p. 174-176, 198; H. Brugsch, 'Der Tempel von Der-el-Medineh', *ZÄS* 13, 1875, p. 123-128.

16 J. H. Taylor, 'Theban Coffins from the Twenty-Second to the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty: Dating and Synthesis of Development', in N. Strudwick, J. H. Taylor (eds), *The Theban Necropolis: Past, Present, Future*, London, 2003, p. 117-119.

17 O. Neugebauer, R. A. Parker, *Egyptian Astronomical Texts III. Decans, Planets, Constellations and Zodiacs*, Providence, 1969, p. 91 (no. 67), pl. 47A; reproduced in Herbin, *op. cit.,* p. 12, fig. 9; and Riggs, *The Beautiful Burial,* p. 202, fig. 98.

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Each register is 'bookended' by representations of the four winds, which are oriented towards the centre of the coffin: conceptually, the head end of the coffin is north and the foot end is south:

West wind →	← East wind
North wind →	← South wind

In coffins with the goddess Nut painted inside the lid, like Soter's, the head of the goddess is also at the north/head end, over the head of the deceased.[18]

The depiction of the winds on the coffin of Soter is identical to their depiction on the west face of the architrave in the pronaos of the Deir el-Medina temple of Hathor [fig. 2]. On the architrave, two of the winds appear at either end of the double row of hieroglyphic inscription, 'bookending' it in the same way that they frame the coffin's main register.[19] Each wind is oriented (left or right) in the same direction on both the temple and the coffin, and the winds are paired East –West and South– North on each side of the coffin just as they are in the lower and upper registers of the temple inscription. Thus, the artist responsible for Soter's coffin did not need to change the orientation or the pairing of the winds but could copy them directly from the temple to Soter's coffin, or from the temple to an unknown source and thence to the coffin.

Although references to winds from the four cardinal points can be traced back to the Pyramid Texts and Coffin Texts, the personifications of the four winds are only represented during the Ptolemaic and Roman periods.[20] They appear in animal forms in a number of Greco-Roman temples, including Deir el-Medina, the Opet temple at Karnak, Kom Ombo, Esna, Armant, and Dendera, and with human bodies and animal heads at Dendera.[21] The winds are also attested on a handful of sarcophagi dating from the end of the Late Period to the Ptolemaic Period, and on one lost, wooden coffin inscribed for a man named Heter, from Thebes, dated to AD 125 based on his horoscope and age at death [fig. 3].[22]

The representation of the winds at the temple of Deir el-Medina is the nearest parallel for the winds as they appear on the Soter coffin. The west wind, Hedja, is represented in both the temple and on the coffin with a falcon's body, two pairs of wings, and a ram's head surmounted by horns and an ostrich feather. In the temple the east wind, Henushesu, has the body of a

18 Neugebauer, Parker, *op. cit.,* p. 94 observe that Nut is oriented west or northwest in zodiacs, with the southern and northern constellations positioned accordingly.

19 *Deir el-Médînâ,* no. 112 (with text at l. 1-4).

20 S. Woodhouse, 'The Sun God, His Four Bas and the Four Winds in the Sacred District at Sais: the Fragment of an Obelisk (BM EA 1512)', in S. Quirke (ed.), *The Temple in Ancient Egypt. New Discoveries and Recent Research*, London, 1997, p. 133; A. Gutbub, 'Die vier Winde im Tempel von Kom Ombos', in O. Keel, *Jahwe-Visionen und Siegelkunst. Eine neue Deutung der Majestaetsschilderungen in Jes 6, Ez 1 und 10 und Sach 4* , Stuttgart, 1977, p. 328.

21 Gutbub, *op. cit.,* p. 329-36; C. de Wit, 'Les génies des quatre vents au temple d'Opet', *ChronEg* 32, 1957, p. 25-29.

22 Neugebauer, Parker, *op. cit.,* p. 93-95 (cat. 71), pl. 50, with further references; PM I², 2, 647; H. Brugsch, *ZDMG* 14, 1860, p. 15-28; see also Gutbub, *op. cit.,* p. 332-333. Like Neugebauer and Parker, Gutbub was not aware of the winds on Soter's coffin; Neugebauer and Parker evidently worked only from photographs of the coffin interior for their discussion of Soter's zodiac.

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scarab, two pairs of horns, and the head of a ram, with horns and an ostrich feather; on the coffin, he has four ram's heads. The north wind, Keb (literally, 'the cold one') is a four-headed ram, with two pairs of wings, one set of horns, and the ostrich feather; he is identical on both coffin and temple.[23] The south wind, Sheheb (literally, 'the drying one') has a lion's body and a ram's head, again with two pairs of wings, horns, and an ostrich feather, on both the coffin and the temple scenes.

The coffin of Heter has the same Theban provenance, date, and arched form as Soter's coffin, although it is difficult to judge how similar the two are stylistically since Heter's coffin is only known through Brugsch's line drawing [fig. 3]. Like the Soter coffin, Heter's has a zodiac inside its arched lid, and this is where the representations of the four winds appear. The winds are at each end of the interior long side, 'bookending' two registers in which several constellations and the hours of the day and night appear. The right side of the lid, along the proper left side of Nut's body, positions the north wind at the head end and the east wind at the foot. Opposite, on the left side of the led, the west wind is at the head end and the south wind at the foot. The winds are thus paired North-East and West-South, rather than North-South and East-West as they are on Soter's coffin. Nonetheless, the layout of the winds maintains the northern (or north-western) association of the head end of the coffin.

In the temple at Deir el-Medina, the architrave inscription between the representations of the four winds consists of four texts identifying each wind in turn. The texts are symmetrically arranged on each row so that the two left-hand texts refer to the paired winds at the left of the architrave, and the right-hand texts to the pair at the right. On the coffin of Soter, texts referring to each of the four winds appear on the corner post closest to each representation, but these texts are very different from the temple texts. Instead, they parallel the texts associated with each wind inside the coffin of Heter. Each wind 'speaks' in a text beginning with *jnk*, 'I am', and ending with a reference to the deceased.

Gutbub characterized the ram-based representation of the winds as a 'Theban system', since the ram is associated with Amun of Thebes and, as de Wit observed, the writing of *ba*.[24] De Wit also suggested that all four animal bodies of the winds –ram, lion, falcon, and scarab –were significant, with the ram body representing Khnum or the *ba* of Mendes; the lion, a central African animal, suited to the hot, dry, southern wind; the scarab associated with the east wind and the rising sun, Khepri; and the falcon recalling the *ba*-bird of the dead and thus appropriate for the west wind.[25] The temple inscriptions draw out the character and function of the different winds in a similar way: the refreshing north (Mediterranean) wind; the hot southern wind, which is associated with the source of the Nile flood; the east wind from which the sun and moon rise; and the west wind, identified with the land of the dead.

The winds are inextricably associated with Shu as well, from the *šw*-feathers on their heads to the inscriptions referring to the west wind as Shu (in *qbb*) on the coffins of Soter and Heter. In keeping with their airy, celestial nature, the winds appear on the upper reaches of temple

23 Elsewhere in the Deir el-Medina temple, the four-headed ram can represent a *ba,* such as the *ba* of Osiris over the doorway in the east wall of the southern chapel: *Deir el-Médînâ,* no. 62.

24 Gutbub, *op. cit.,* p. 339-344; de Wit, *op. cit.,* p. 30-34.

25 De Wit, *op. cit.,* p. 39.

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walls, like the pronaos architrave at Deir el-Medina. Likewise, they stand alongside the zodiac and constellations inside the coffin of Heter, and they adorn the highest part of the coffin of Soter, the arc which represents the sky.

The Deir el-Medina winds and the Soter coffin winds so closely resemble each other in artistic detail, orientation, and positioning that the earlier temple can reasonably be seen as the source for the later coffin. The same is probably also true for the roughly contemporary coffin of Heter, which reverses the orientation of the north and west winds but is otherwise almost identical to the Soter coffin in this respect, the sole difference being the lack of wings on the Heter coffin's scarab-bodied east wind. A less direct relationship can also be posited, whereby such coffins and the Deir el-Medina temple reflect a common source.

THE JUDGEMENT SCENE AND PROCESSION OF DEITIES ON THE COFFIN OF SOTER

Like the winds on each end of the registers in the arch of Soter's coffin, the scenes depicted in the registers also find close parallels in the Hathor temple at Deir el-Medina. The procession of deities, divine emblems, and sacred barks on the right side of the lid, and the judgement scene on the left, parallel the north and south walls, respectively, of the temple's southern chapel, which is dedicated to the goddess Maat in her role as protector of Deir el-Medina. Like Hathor, Maat could be described in Egyptian myth as a daughter of the sun god Re.

The southern chapel bears the only judgement scene attested in temple decoration, which fills the entire south wall of the chapel [fig. 4].[26] The generic male deceased enters the judgement hall at far left, between two representations of Maat (*Deir el-Médinêh,* no. 58), and the hieroglyphic inscription refers to him as 'the true of voice, the foremost of the westerners' (*Deir el-Médinêh,* no. 58, 21-22). From left to right, Harsiese and Anubis tend the balance, Thoth writes, a child-god (Harpocrates) sits atop the *heka*-sceptre, the destroyer Ammet sits atop a shrine, and the four sons of Horus stand on a lotus blossom, on the plinth of Osiris's throne. Osiris is alone at the far right of the scene, and thus facing towards the chapel entrance, with the *imiwt*-symbol in front of him. The 42 judges of the dead are arranged in two rows at the top of the register, squatting and holding *was*-sceptres. In Seeber's schema, the Deir el-Medina judgement scene is Type E II/2, characterized by the gesture of the deceased and his position between two figures of Maat. All the other attestations of this type of judgement scene are on Ptolemaic funerary papyri.[27]

The judgement scene on Soter's coffin is Seeber's Type E III. Although a similar, but much reduced, version of this judgement appears on other Soter-group coffins,[28] it differs in almost every detail from the Deir el-Medina scene: the deceased is shown as a mummy, there is only

26 Chr. Seeber, *Untersuchungen zur Darstellung des Totengerichts im Alten Ägypten*, Munich, Berlin, 1976, p. 29.
27 *Ibid.,* p. 243.
28 The coffins of Sensaos (see n. 13) and Kleopatra (see n. 14) depict Ammet and the balance on the left side of the arched lid, near the head end. On Kleopatra's coffin, Thoth, Anubis, and the deceased appear on the right side of the lid. On the coffin of Sensaos, they are on the left side, next to the balance, while the goddess Maat appears on the right side, her head replaced by a feather.

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one representation of Maat, and the balance is tended by Horus, with his head turned backwards, and a baboon-headed figure, possibly one of the son of Horus, Hapy. The balance pans are shown as baskets, with a figure of Maat in one and a mummy in the other. Thoth wears a long kilt and the *hem-hem* crown, and reads from an open scroll. Ammet has a solar disc on her head, and Harpocrates, the four sons, and the *imiwt* are not present.

Since the judgement scene is frequently depicted in funerary art of the Roman Period, the artists of the Soter-family coffins had many referents other than the Deir el-Medina temple scene, and it is not surprising that the coffin and temple judgement scenes diverge in their details. The *position* of the judgement on the coffin supports the close affinity between this coffin and the temple, because it is paired with a procession of deities just as the temple's Maat chapel pairs the judgement scene with the Sokar festival.

Opposite the Deir el-Medina judgement scene, on the north wall of the southern chapel [fig. 5], Ptolemy VI censes several gods, divine emblems, and the *henu*-bark of Sokar (*Deir el-Médinêh,* no. 60). The title of the scene refers to the Sokar festival (q.v., 1-3):

nfr.wy nn sp sn Skr psḏ m Ḥnw sp nfr pḫr m tꜣ ḥr ndb.f ỉˁb Wsỉr m ỉpt-wrt ỉn nṯrw

How beautiful is this! Sokar shines in the henu*-bark, and good fortune goes around the entire earth*[29] *on the day that Osiris is reunited in* Ipet-weret *by the gods.*

Five elements of this temple scene appear on the coffin of Soter: Anubis holding a tambourine;[30] the emblem of Nefertum, shown on its side on top of a shrine; the standards of Thoth and Horus; Min, who is shown with a back pillar and standing on a shrine; and the *henu*-bark of Sokar. Although the *henu*-bark on its own is well-attested in funerary art, especially at Thebes, the other elements are distinctive and unexpected on a Roman Period coffin.[31] Just one of these elements on its own –Anubis with the tambourine, or the Nefertum emblem, or the standards, or Min –would be noteworthy in this context. To find all four together, and in conjunction with the Sokar bark, cannot be a coincidence, and the southern chapel of the Deir el-Medina temple is a local source where all the components do appear in one scene.

The coffin procession is not an exact copy of the temple scene. For one thing, the coffin scene reversed the orientation of the temple scene. Further, the artist adapted some figures, added others, and removed details that appear in the temple, in particular the standards of Sokar, Wepwawet, the 'followers of Sokar', and the throne cushion. In the temple, Anubis wears a fringed mantle that covers his body but leaves his arms free to hold the tambourine. On the coffin, his arms are enveloped by the mantle, and the tambourine is thus close to his body.[32] The artist of the coffin has either misunderstood the Nefertum symbol or purposely altered it to look like a wrapped bundle with a lotus flower emerging. Its carrying poles,

29 For the expression, see P. Wilson, *A Ptolemaic Lexikon. A Lexicographical Study of the Texts in the Temple of Edfu*, Leuven, 1997, p. 561-2 (q.v. *ndb*).

30 R. K. Ritner, 'Anubis and the Lunar Disk', *JEA* 71, 1985, p. 149: comparable to a scene at Esna, where the text identifies the round object as a tambourine. Elsewhere, the disc is associated with the moon, and is tended or supported, rather than held, by Anubis.

31 For the Sokar bark on Roman Period funerary art from Thebes, compare Chr. Riggs, 'Roman Mummy Masks from Deir el-Bahri', *JEA* 86, 2000, p. 130-131.

32 Similar to the posture and enveloping wraps shown on priests carrying sacred vessels: P. P. Koemoth, 'L'hydrie isiaque et le rituel égyptien à l'époque romaine', *CRIPEL* 20, 1999, p. 109-123.

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which are visible in the temple scene, become a long platform on top of the shrine, and the two feathers do not appear. On the other side of the *henu*-bark, the coffin adds the *neshmet*-bark of Osiris to the scene, depicted on its own body of water and with its tow rope held by Nephthys. This bark does not appear in the Deir el-Medina temple, but it is well-attested in Roman Period funerary art.

On both the coffin and the temple, Min is depicted in his ithyphallic form, with a back pillar, and standing on a shrine. The top of Min's shrine is elongated in the coffin register, like the platform for the Nefertum symbol. He wears a broad collar and a shrine-shaped pectoral, but the coffin does not depict the painted wings that are visible in the temple scene. The inclusion of Min on Soter's coffin might have been based not only on the god's fertility but also on his association with Koptos. A man named Imhotep, whose coffin was made and decorated in the style of the Soter group, held priestly titles in the cults of Min and Isis at Koptos, and the names of Soter and his daughter Kleopatra may refer to the Ptolemaic ruler cult at Koptos.[33] A close link between these Theban burials and the cults of Koptos would make Min especially relevant in the context of the coffin decoration.

The depiction of the Sokar festival in the Maat chapel at Deir el-Medina forms a counterpart to the judgement scene on the opposite wall, with its Osirian, funerary basis. Sokar's ancient links with Hathor might also have made the Sokar festival germane to the programme of the temple as a whole.[34] In a private context, the Sokar festival inspired the rites depicted in tombs, such as the 4th century BC tomb of Petosiris at Tuna el-Gebel, and into the Roman Period, funerary papyri and inscriptions refer to the rebirth of the deceased on the night of the 25th of Khoiak, during the Sokar festival.[35] Representing the festival, together with Osiris's *neshmet*-bark, evoked the ritual of triumphant rebirth on the coffin of Soter and, in effect, signified the outcome of the judgement scene on the opposite side of the coffin lid.

IMHOTEP AND AMENHOTEP, SON OF HAPU, ON THE COFFINS OF KLEOPATRA AND PETAMENOPHIS AMMONIOS

Kleopatra and Petamenophis were brother and sister, two of at least nine children born to Soter and his wife Kleopatra Kandake. Kleopatra died around the age of 17, although the year of her death is not known.[36] Petamenophis, who was also known as Ammonios, died aged 19 in AD 116. The coffins of Kleopatra and Petamenophis were not decorated by the same hand – the large figures of Nut on the coffin bases are very different, and Kleopatra's coffin lid lacks the zodiac that appears inside the coffin lid of Petamenophis. However, they share an almost identical scene on the head end of the lid [figs. 6 and 7].

33 Marseille, musée d'Archéologie méditerranéenne 260: 172.0 cm L. ; see Riggs, *The Beautiful Burial,* p. 287-288 (no. 98); Chr. Seeber, *loc. cit.*

34 G. A. Gaballa, K. A. Kitchen, 'The Festival of Sokar', *Orientalia* 38, 1969, p. 62-64.

35 *Ibid.,* p. 70, esp. n. 2.

36 Van Landuyt, *op. cit.,* p. 74.

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Like several other coffins in the Soter group, the head end of these coffin lids takes the form of a temple gateway, defining a sacred space around the head of the mummy.[37] The arch of the lid is not visible from the head end, because it is covered by rectangular planks that are decorated with a frieze of uraei and a double cavetto cornice, supported by slender columns at the sides.[38] On each coffin, the scene inside this temple framework depicts two seated male figures, one on each side facing the central motif of a scarab surrounded by the serpent Mehen, swallowing its tail. Mehen is an underworld deity who protects the sun god in the 7 th hour of the night.[39] The snake and scarab are on a papyrus skiff with a sharply angled, sickle-shaped prow and stern, a shape especially associated with funerary boats.[40] On Kleopatra's coffin, two standing female figures flank the snake and scarab, with their hands raised up and facing outward in a gesture of adoration. These figures may represent Isis and Nephthys, or the deceased young woman herself, adoring the sun god in the afterlife.

One of the seated male figures (on the left on Petamenophis's coffin, and on the right on Kleopatra's coffin) wears a corselet and short kilt, with a long, pleated robe that extends from his chest to his ankles. Although the robe is shown 'behind' his legs, it should be interpreted as a diaphanous garment. He wears a *khat*-shaped wig or hairstyle, ending at his shoulders, and a broad collar. In his right hand he holds an *ankh*-sign, and in his left, a long thin object which can be identified as a scribal palette. The other seated male figure on each coffin is a mirror image, except that this figure has close-shaved hair or a skull cap instead of the shoulder-length wig.

The two seated male figures –one with the *khat,* the other close-shaved –represent Amenhotep, son of Hapu, and Imhotep, respectively, who were deified and worshipped together as healing gods.[41] This pairing of the two deified priests is especially well-attested at Thebes in the Ptolemaic and Roman period, where they are represented together in the temple of Ptah (Ptolemy V – Ptolemy IX) and the temple of Amun (Ptolemy IX) at Karnak; the Hatshepsut temple at Deir el-Bahri (Ptolemy VIII and Roman Period); the temple at Qasr el-Aguz (Ptolemy VIII), behind Medinet Habu; and in the pronaos of the Hathor temple at Deir el-Medina (Ptolemy VI).[42] There were also priesthoods devoted to the cults.[43] The iconography of the two deified men is consistent, especially in distinguishing their characteristic head-coverings. Each man's

37 Riggs, *The Beautiful Burial,* p. 186.

38 See Herbin, *op. cit.,* p. 27, fig. 25 for a diagram of the coffin construction.

39 For Mehen, see P. Piccione, *JARCE* 27, 1990, p. 43-52; I thank Laurent Coulon for this reference.

40 D. Jones, *Boats*, London, 1995, p. 19, pl. vii.

41 D. Wildung, *Imhotep und Amenhotep. Gottwerdung im alten Ägypten*, Munich, Berlin, 1977 (afterwards Wildung, *Imhotep und Amenhotep*); D. Wildung, *Egyptian Saints*, New York, 1977. For Imhotep, see also K. Sethe, 'Imhotep, der Asklepios der Ägypter, ein vergötterter Mensch aus der Zeit des königs Djoser', in K. Sethe, *Untersuchungen zur Geschicte und Altertumskunde Ägyptens* 2, 1902 ; J. B. Hurry, *Imhotep*, Oxford, 1928. For Amenhotep, see also K. Sethe, 'Amenhotep, der Sohn des Hapu', in *Aegyptiaca. Festschrift für Georg Ebers zum 1. Marz* 1897, Leipzig, 1897, p. 107-116; W. R. Dawson, 'Amenophis the Son of Hapu', *Aegyptus* 7, 1926, p. 113-138; A. Varille, *Inscriptions concernant l' architecte Amenhotep fils de Hapou*, Cairo, 1968, p. 143-148.

42 Wildung, *Imhotep und Amenhotep*, p. 201-248; A. Bataille, *Les Memnonia*, Cairo, 1952, p. 177. Line drawings of a number of these scenes are reproduced in Hurry, *op. cit.,* p. 73-87. For the Deir el-Bahri sanctuary, see E. Laskowska-Kusztal, *Deir el Bahari III. Le sanctuaire ptolémaïque de Deir el-Bahari*, Warsaw, 1984, and E. Naville, *The Temple of Deir el Bahari,* Part V, London, 1906, p. 11-12, pls. CLXVIII-CL; for Qasr el-Agouz, see D. Mallet, *Le Kasr El-Agouz*, Cairo, 1909, p. 38, fig. 11.

43 A priest of Imhotep is attested on a bilingual (Greek and Demotic) mummy label from Thebes, Brooklyn Museum of Art 37.1395 E (Wildung, *Imhotep und Amenhotep,* p. 196-197), and a priest of Amenhotep on a Demotic ostracon (*ibid.,* p. 263-264).

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clothing is usually distinctive, too: in the temple scenes, Amenhotep wears a wrap-around gown extending from just below his chest to his ankles, with a strap across his chest and over one shoulder, while Imhotep wears a corselet and a short kilt.

At the Deir el-Medina temple, Imhotep is represented on the left pillar in the pronaos, seated on a throne and facing right into the aisle that leads to the central chapel [fig. 8].[44] He wears a broad collar, a shrine-shaped pectoral, a corselet, and a knee-length kilt, and holds an *ankh*-sign in his left hand and a *was*-sceptre in his right. Two goddesses stand behind him, Kheredu-[ankh] and Renpet-neferet.[45] Opposite, in the same position on the right pillar of the pronaos, Amenhotep, son of Hapu, sits facing left [fig. 9].[46] He also holds an *ankh*-sign and the *was*-sceptre, and his garment starts at mid-chest. The lower part of the scene is destroyed, but traces of a long kilt appear in one recording.[47] Amenhotep also wears a broad collar and shrine-shaped pectoral, together with his typical shoulder-length wig. One goddess stands behind him, identified as 'the god's mother, the beautiful nurse, Itit, lady of beauty', and behind her is a single column of hieroglyphic inscription containing a funerary formula for Amenhotep.[48]

The artists responsible for the coffins of Petamenophis and Kleopatra made only slight alterations to the Deir el-Medina images: the positions of Amenhotep and Imhotep are reversed from their positions in the temple on Petamenophis's coffin, but have the same orientation as the temple figures on Kleopatra's coffin. On both coffins, the two men hold scribal palettes rather than the *was*-sceptre, with its strongly divine symbolism. The artists also depicted the men with identical clothing on both coffins, distinguishing them only by their different headcoverings.

In their deified forms, Amenhotep and Imhotep were associated with wisdom as well as medicine and healing. Although imbued with god-like powers and status, they were always acknowledged and honoured as deceased humans: thus the appearance of the funerary offering formula next to Amenhotep at Deir el-Bahri, and the linking of Imhotep with his mother, Kheredu-ankh.[49] Imhotep became closely identified with the Greek god of medicine, Asklepios, and in the Ptolemaic and Roman Period sanctuary at Deir el-Bahri, Imhotep-Asklepios and Amenhotep, son of Hapu, formed a triad with the Greek goddess of health, Hygeia.[50] Greek graffiti at this sanctuary and at their other cult places attest the healing powers of Imhotep and Amenhotep, son of Hapu.[51] A late Ptolemaic Demotic ostracon from Thebes records the result

44 *Deir el-Médinâ,* no. 151. See also Wildung, *Imhotep und Amenhotep,* p. 217-218. The line drawing of the scene does not depict the line of the corselet, although it is mentioned in the description.

45 The inscription identifying Kheredu-ankh is damaged, but reads in part 'divine mother, the [beautiful] nurse… Kheredu-…': *Deir el-Médinâ,* no. 151, l. 6. Compare Laskowska-Kusztal, *op. cit.,* p. 47-48, figs. 39-42, where Imhotep appears with Kheredu-ankh and Renpet-nefret on the south wall of the sanctuary. For Kheredu-ankh, who came to be identified as the mother of Imhotep, see H. De Meulenaere, 'La mère d'Imouthes', *ChronEg* 41, 1966, p. 40-49, with further references.

46 *Deir el-Médinâ,* no. 166; Wildung, *Imhotep und Amenhotep,* p. 219-220.

47 Wildung, *Imhotep und Amenhotep,* line drawing on p. 219.

48 Goddess: *Deir el-Médinâ,* no. 166, l. 7-8; offering formula: *ibid.,* no. 166, l. 9. See also Wildung, *Imhotep und Amenhotep,* p. 219, and compare Laskowska-Kusztal, *op. cit.,* figs. 30-33, where Amenhotep appears with Hathor-Itet on the north wall of the sanctuary.

49 See also K. Sethe, 'Imhotep' (*op. cit.*), p. 6-7.

50 A. Bataille, *Les inscriptions grecques du temple de Hatshepsout à Deir el-Bahari*, Cairo, 1951, p. ix.

51 *Ibid.,* e.g. nos. 74, 86, 126; also C. R. Peers, 'Greek Graffiti from Der el Bahari and El Kab', *JHS* 19, 1899, p. 13-18; J. G. Milne, 'The Sanatorium of Der-el-Bahri', *JEA* 1, 1914, p. 96-98.

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of an oracular consultation put to the deified Amenhotep, and reported by a priest of Imhotep: the god diagnoses a fever in Teos, the son of Psenamunis, and prescribes a remedy.[52]

The cults of Amenhotep and Imhotep had little obvious connection with Egyptian funerary religion, aside from the mortuary cult offered to the two men themselves. A passage from the *Ritual of Embalming,* preserved on two 1st century AD papyri from Thebes, is notable because it refers to Amenhotep and Imhotep in a funerary context outside their own cult.[53] The passage addresses the deceased: 'Your soul comes near to the royal scribe, the chief scribe of recruits, Amenhotep. Your soul unites with Imhotep while you are in the Valley'. This text situates the soul of the deceased in the Theban mortuary landscape –the 'valley'– and suggests that the presence and protection of Amenhotep and Imhotep are a benefit to the deceased and, by extension, a sign of the soul's rebirth. Kákosy suggested that the association of Amenhotep and Imhotep with the deceased was a kind of 'patronage', valued because the deified men's knowledge and wisdom would help the deceased reach the afterlife.[54]

By the same token, the representation of Amenhotep, son of Hapu and Imhotep on the coffins of Kleopatra and Petamenophis could be interpreted as a visual expression of the *Ritual of Embalming,* with the deified figures in close proximity to the reborn deceased. Amenhotep and Imhotep contribute their secret knowledge to the deceased's process of rejuvenation. There is, however, another dimension to the appearance of Amenhotep and Imhotep on these coffins. Given the popularity and renown of their healing cults at Thebes –their sanctuary at Deir el-Bahri bears *proskynemata* left by visitors from Koptos and other Thebaid towns–[55] representing Amenhotep and Imhotep in a prominent position on the coffins' head ends would have reminded local viewers of the pair's healing, medical powers.

Thus in the decorative scheme of the coffins, Amenhotep and Imhotep might refer not only to the metaphorical healing of the soul as it was renewed in the afterlife, but also to the literal healing that priests, doctors, or healer-magicians would have tried to bring about during the course of the deceased's illness. Like several other children of Soter and his wife, Petamenophis and Kleopatra died prematurely. Their mummies, which are preserved, reveal no sign of trauma, and their deaths were most likely due to infectious disease.[56] It requires only a little stretch of the imagination to suppose that in such a situation, a family like Soter's attempted many things to heal the sick, perhaps including recourse to the cults of Amenhotep and Imhotep at Deir el-Bahri or Deir el-Medina. Seen in this light, the identical head ends on the coffins of Kleopatra and her brother Petamenophis are like visual entreaties and, not ironically, emblems of thanksgiving, in honour of the healing gods of Thebes.

52 From the collection of Herbert Thompson; present location unknown. See Wildung, *Imhotep und Amenhotep,* p. 263-264; H. Thompson, 'A Demotic Ostracon', *PSBA* 35, 1913, p. 95-96.

53 S. Sauneron, *Rituel de l'embaumement*, Cairo, 1952, p. 10 (l. 3, 23 to 4, 1); cf. L. Kákosy, 'Imhotep and Amenhotep Son of Hapu as Patrons of the Dead', in L. Kákosy, *Selected Papers*, *StudAeg* VII, Budapest, 1981, p. 175. One of the papyri, P. Boulaq III, belonged to Heter, the owner of the lost coffin decorated with the zodiac and four winds (see n. 22).

54 Kákosy, *op. cit.,* pp. 179-81.

55 Bataille, *op. cit.,* pp. 85-9 (no. 126).

56 For the mummy of Kleopatra, see W. R. Dawson, P. H. K. Gray, *Catalogue of Egyptian Antiquities in the British Museum, I. Mummies and Human Remains*, London, 1968, p. 33 (no. 63), pl. 17 a. For the mummy of Petamenophis, see Aubert, Cortopassi, *op. cit.,* pp. 34-35 (no. 2); Herbin, *op. cit.,* p. 4, fig. 1, and p. 40-41 with figs. 34-36. For the mummy of their sister Sensaos, which has been CT-scanned, see Raven, Taconis, *op. cit.,* p. 179-183.

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CONCLUSION

The burials of the Soter group exemplify the strongly local nature of funerary art in the Roman Period. The decoration of the Soter-group coffins and shrouds, as well as the location and manner of the burials, are inextricably linked to the Theban setting. Their traditional character incorporates archaisms like the form of the corner-post coffins and the replication of much earlier texts and scenes. Identifying the correlations between three of the coffins –those of Soter, Kleopatra, and Petamenophis Ammonios– and the temple of Hathor at Deir el-Medina reveals how such copies and adaptations came about. The people who designed and created the Soter family coffins found artistic sources on their doorstep – literally so, if the artists and scribes capable of producing such material were trained in workshops affiliated with temples. Moreover, the relationship between the coffins and the Deir el-Medina temple underscores the role of Egyptian priests across the temple and funerary spheres. At Deir el-Medina, the Hathor sanctuary was in active use during the Roman Period, and access to the three chapels, if not to the pronaos, would have been restricted.[57]

Three specific parallels have been identified between the temple and the Soter family coffins:

1. The four winds in the temple pronaos and the four winds on Soter's coffin.
2. The southern chapel scenes and the registers on Soter's coffin lid.
3. The pronaos column images of Imhotep and Amenhotep, son of Hapu and their appearance on the head ends of Kleopatra's and Petamenophis's coffins. A handful of more general comparisons can also be made between the temple and the coffins of the Soter group, to reinforce these observations:

Guardians: The doorway into the southern chapel of the temple is framed by pairs of kneeling guardian deities on its jambs (*Deir el-Médinêh,* nos. 46-51), as is the northern chapel dedicated to Amun (*Deir el-Médinêh,* nos. 73-76). The coffins of Kleopatra, Petamenophis, and Kornelios Pollios[58] depict squatting guardian deities inside shrine-like borders, and some shrouds of the Soter group depicting kneeling guardians with both hands grasping a knife, identical to the stance of the guardians on the temple doorjambs.[59] Although the motif is a common one (guardians also appear on the sides of Late Period *qrsw* coffins)[60], the correspondence is worth noting, if only to reinforce the general connections between temple and funerary decoration.

***Ankh-was-neb* motif:** The embrasures of all three chapel doorways bear the *ankh-was-neb* motif, in which the *ankh*-sign is personified with human arms and holds a *was*-sceptre in either hand, the whole resting on the flat top of a *neb*-sign to yield an emblematic meaning such as 'all life and power' (*Deir el-Médinêh,* nos. 9-10, 53-54, and 80-81).The motif also appears in the temple stairwell and on the side walls of the pronaos (*Deir el-Médinêh,* nos. 133,

57 C. Heurtel, *Les inscriptions coptes et grecques du temple d'Hathor*, Cairo, 2004.

58 British Museum EA 6950: 207.0 cm L.; see Herbin, *op. cit.,* p. 16 fig. 17; Riggs, *The Beautiful Burial,* p. 282 (no. 80), with further references.

59 For the sides of the coffin of Petamenophis, see Herbin, *op. cit.,* p. 31 fig. 29. For kneeling guardians on shrouds, see the shroud of Sensaos (M 76), *ibid.,* p. 20 fig. 24 and in Raven, Taconis, *op. cit.,* p. 179.

60 E.g. J. H. Taylor, *op. cit.,* pls. 55, 73, and 91.

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144, and 158). On the coffins of Sensaos and Petamenophis, the personified *ankh*-sign grasping *was*-sceptres forms a repeat pattern on each side of the arched coffin lid (without the *neb*-sign). Such emblematic uses of hieroglyphs are widespread in Egyptian art, and the *ankh-was-neb* motif appears around the foot cases of Third Intermediate Period and Late Period coffins.[61] Drawing a comparison between the use of this motif on the Soter-group coffins and in the temple of Deir el-Medina is, once again, only a suggestion for underscoring the much stronger links already observed.

Sothis as a cow / Hathor as a cow: In the temple's north chapel, the lintel over the doorway represents the constellation of Orion and the Sothis star (*Deir el-Médinêh,* no. 90, with Sothis at 2-3). Sothis is depicted as a recumbent cow facing right, with a disc between her horns marked with a five-pointed star. On the coffins of Soter, Kleopatra, Petamenophis, and Sensaos, all of which have the zodiac inside their arched lids, a recumbent cow with horns and a solar disc on her head appears inside the lunette-shaped foot end of the coffin lid.[62] Inside the coffin of Petamenophis, the cow faces right, has a *menat*-necklace around her neck, and appears against a background of stars.[63] The solar disc and *menat* suggest an identification with Hathor, probably in the goddess's role as a protector of the dead and of cemeteries; a *ba*-bird next to the cow (except in Soter's coffin) reinforces this role. While the artists of the coffins might have drawn inspiration from the depiction of Sothis in the temple, they adapted the image to its new setting and specific meaning, not unlike the adaptations observed for the representation of the Sokar festival on Soter's coffin lid.

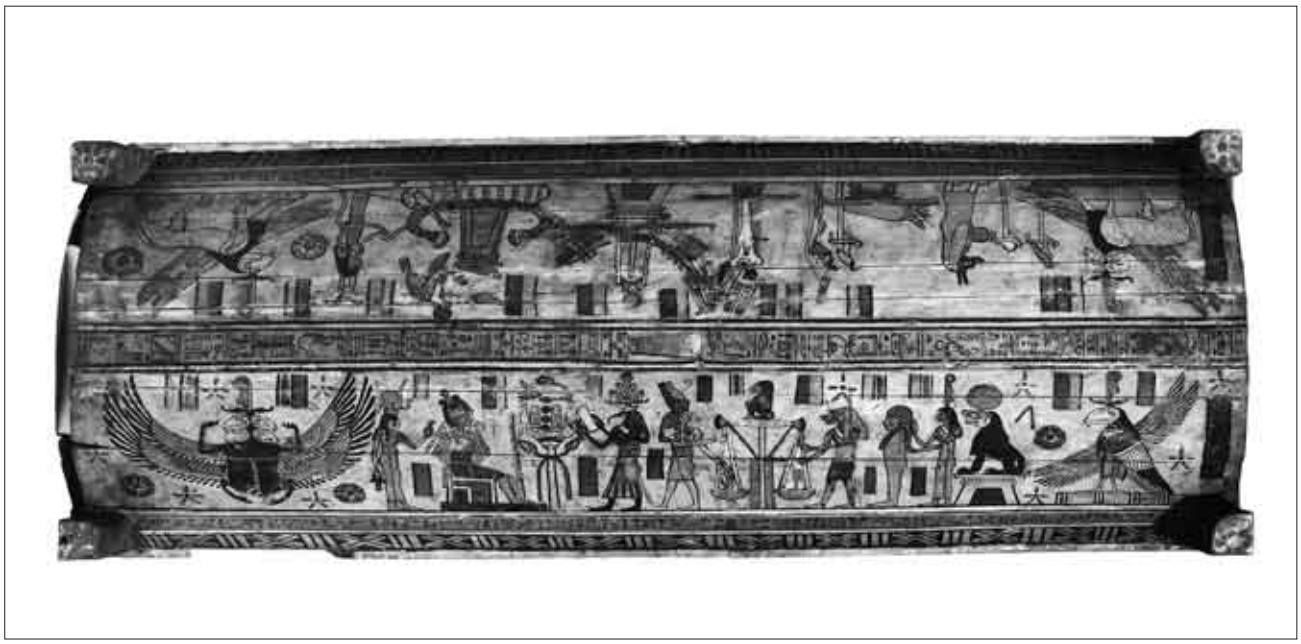
The repertoire of scenes in the Deir el-Medina temple is thus a plausible inspiration or artistic source for the decoration of many of the Soter-family coffins, from minor points of comparison like these, to highly distinctive comparisons such as the appearance of Amenhotep and Imhotep and the depiction of the Sokar festival. The representational schemes of the coffins were planned with the architectural model of temple decoration in mind, from the zodiac lids to the doorway-like head ends. The Deir el-Medina temple was not the only source for the coffins, nor was the archaistic copying that did occur either direct or uninformed. The Soter-group coffins are complex monuments with multiple sources, both traditional and innovative, and their evident connections with the Ptolemaic temple at Deir el-Medina offer one approach to understanding the cultural milieu in which they were produced.

61 *Ibid.,* pls. 45, 63, and 64.

62 For this scene in the coffin of Petamenophis, see Herbin, *op. cit.,* p. 35, fig. 31.

63 The coffin of Soter shows the cow with an *ankh*-sign around her neck, not a *menat*: Herbin, *op. cit.,* p. 12, fig. 9. In the coffin of Kleopatra, the cow faces left.

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© British Museum

FIG. 1. The coffin of Soter, viewed from above (British Museum EA 6705).

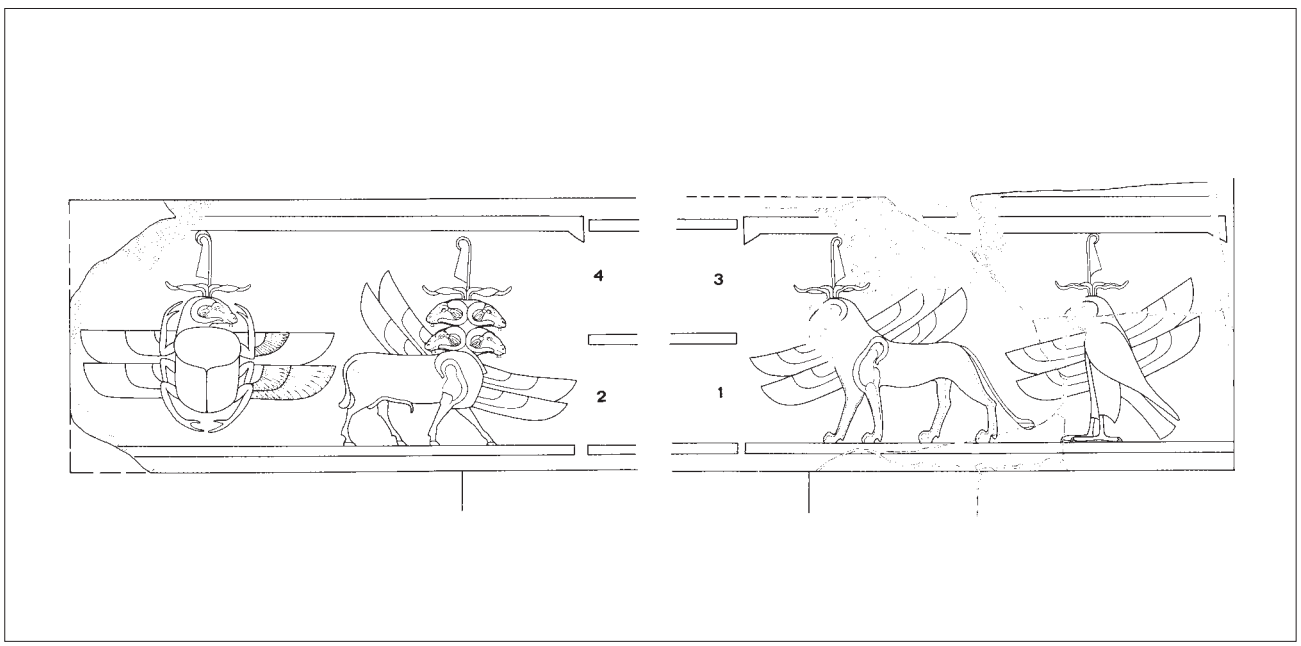
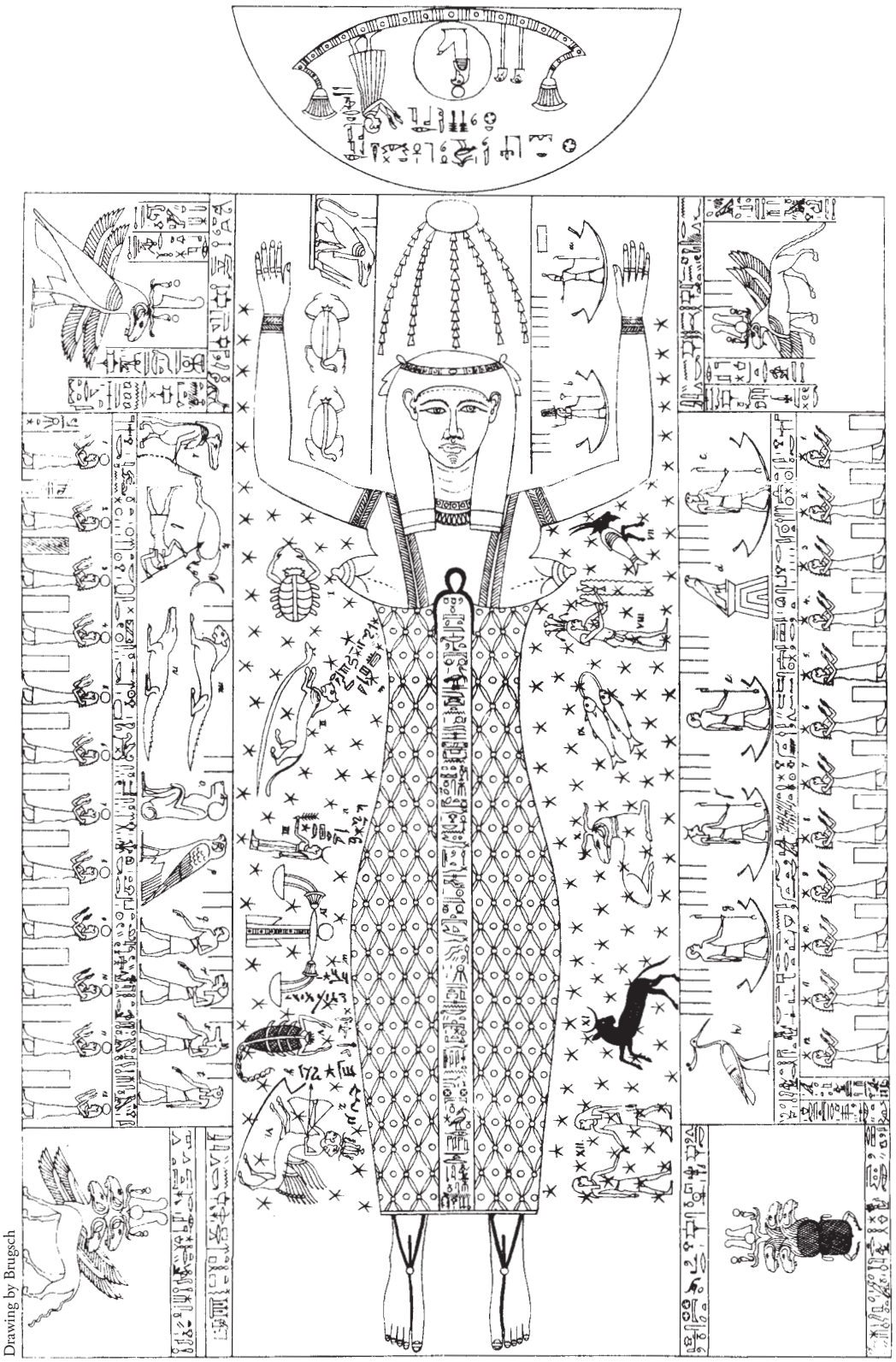


FIG. 2. The four winds in the temple of Hathor, Deir el-Medina.
(P. DU BOURGUET, L. GABOLDE, *Le temple de Deir al-Médîna*, *MIFAO* 121, Cairo, 2002, p. 106).

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Drawing by Brugsch

FIG. 3. The interior of the lid of the coffin of Heter, from Thebes.

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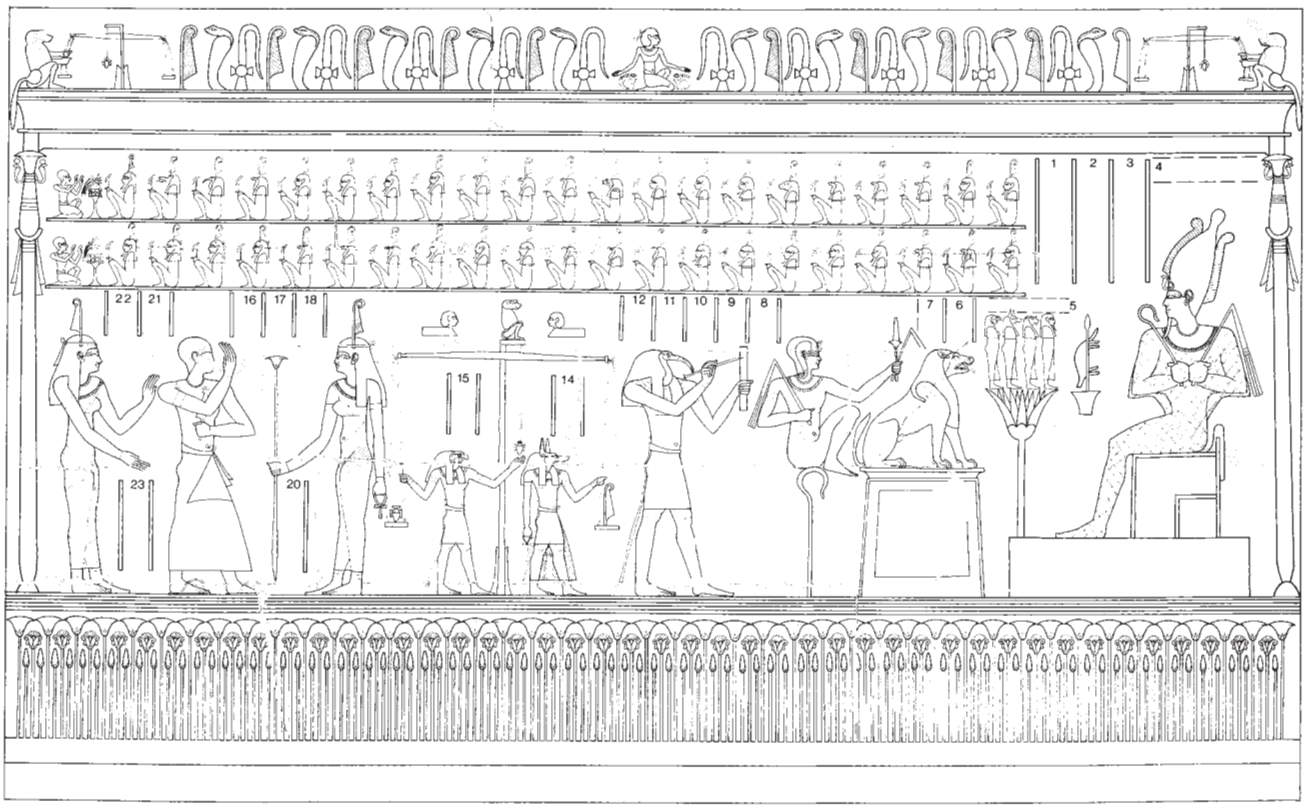


FIG. 4. The judgement scene in the southern chapel of the Deir el-Medina temple.
(P. DU BOURGUET, L. GABOLDE, *Le temple de Deir al-Médîna*, *MIFAO* 121, Cairo, 2002, p. 57).

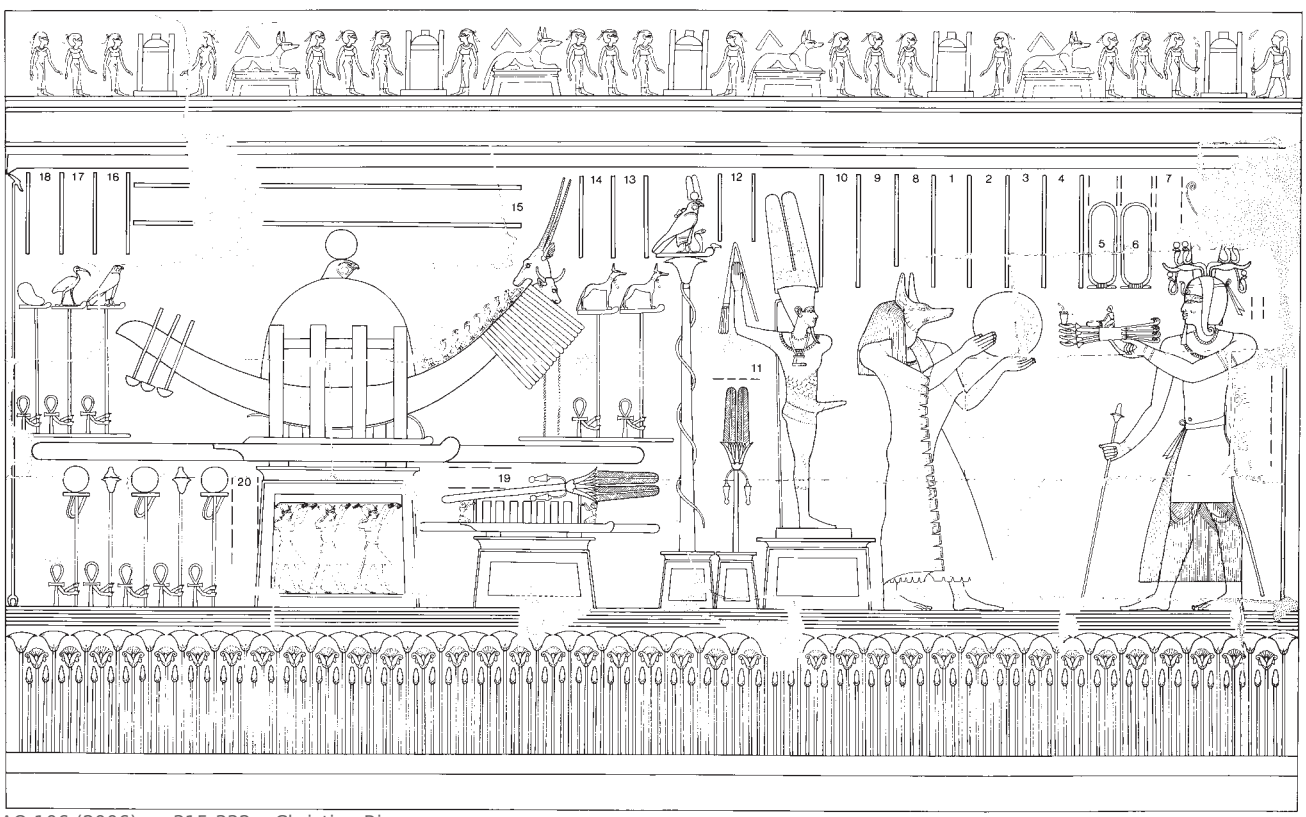


FIG. 5. The festival of Sokar in the southern chapel at Deir el-Medina.
(P. DU BOURGUET, L. GABOLDE, *Le temple de Deir al-Médîna*, *MIFAO* 121, Cairo, 2002, p. 58).

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FIG. 6. The head end of the coffin of Kleopatra (British Museum EA 6706).

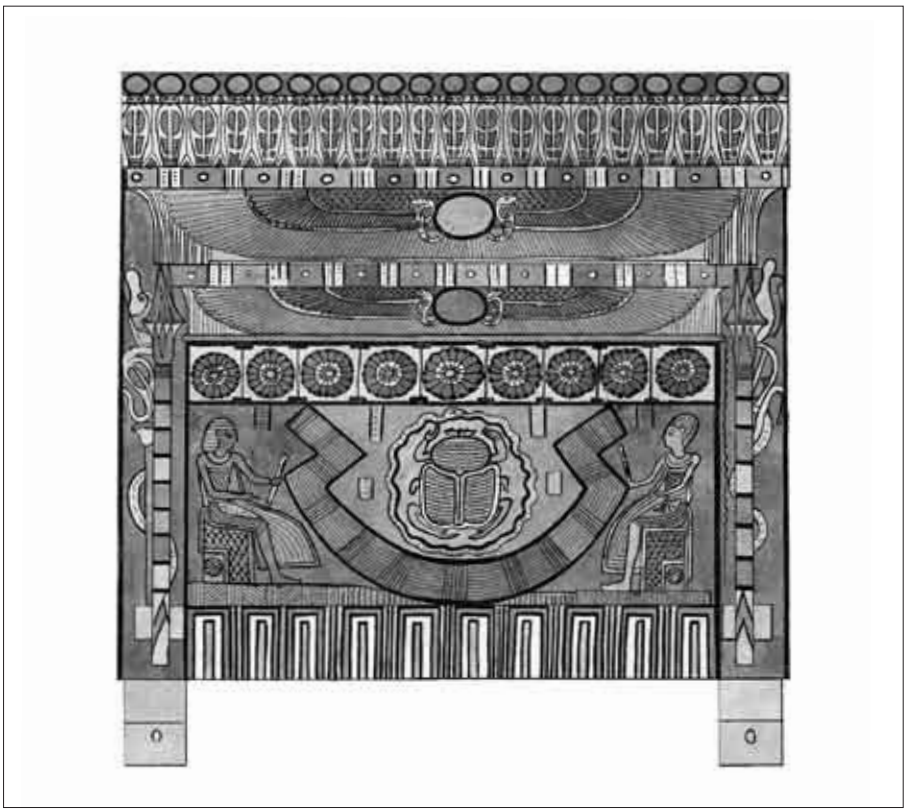
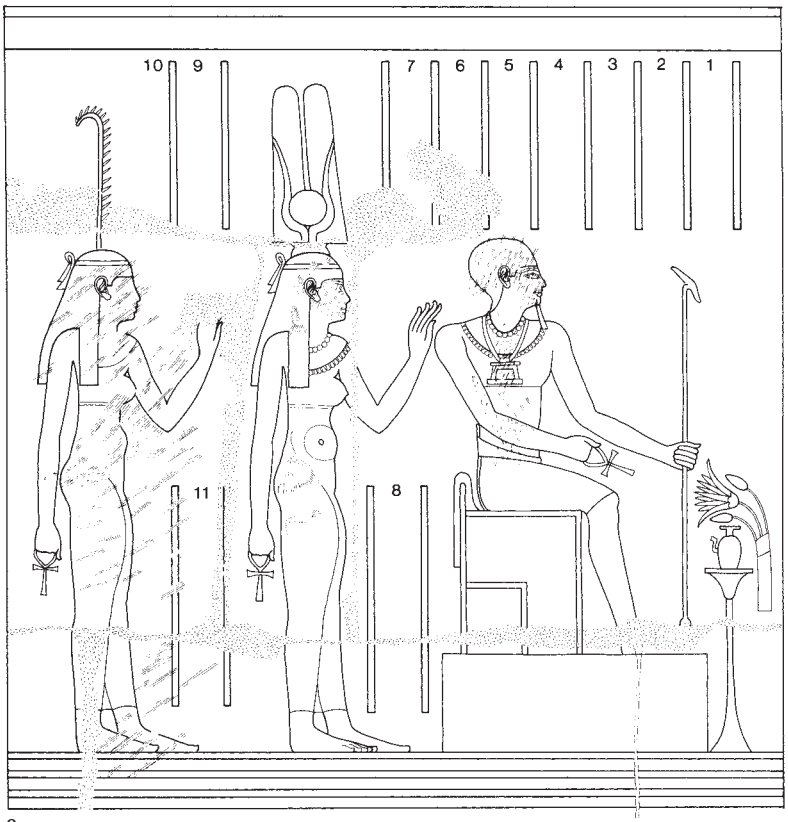
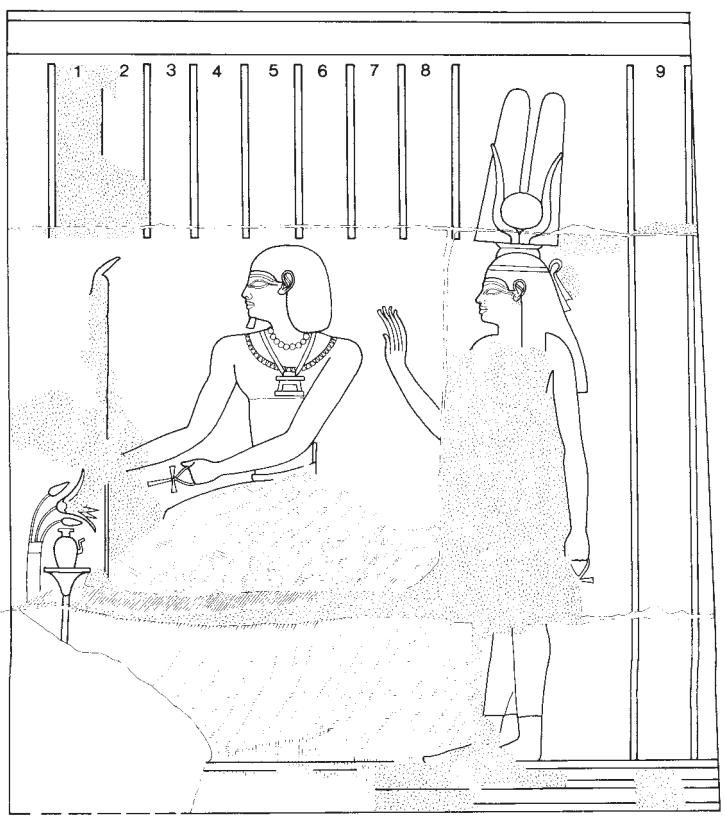


FIG. 7. The head end of the coffin of Petamenophis, called Ammonios (Louvre E 13048). (Fr. CAILLIAUD, *Voyage à Meroé*, Paris, 1823, pl. LXVII/2)

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FIG. 8. Imhotep, in the pronaos of the Deir el-Medina temple. (P. DU BOURGUET, L. GABOLDE, *Le temple de Deir al-Médîna*, *MIFAO* 121, Cairo, 2002, p. 135).
FIG. 9. Amenhotep, son of Hapu, in the pronaos at Deir el-Medina. (*Ibid.*, p. 147).

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