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The Tomb of Petophois: Tomb 5 in the Necropolis of Bir el-Shaghala

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# The Tomb of Petophois: Tomb 5 in the Necropolis of Bir el-Shaghala

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## ABSTRACT

This article presents the results of the excavation of a newly discovered tomb (no. 5) in Bir elShaghala, a necropolis located in the Dakhla Oasis. It belongs to Petophois, Padiwepwaut, who was one of the most important members of the elite society of Mothis (Mut). The superstructure of the tomb has two chambers and a rectangular hall leads to the pyramid chamber, which is the most prominent element of the superstructure of the tomb complex. These three architectural units functioned as a funerary floor for the tomb's visitors. The subterranean structure consists of a rectangular antechamber with a vaulted ceiling and the burial chamber. The tomb has a small shaft in the vaulted ceiling of the burial chamber connected with a long tube passing through the southern subterranean structure and terminating in another shaft in the outside face of the south wall. Most decorations and texts cast light on the 24th, 25th and 26th days of the Osirian Khoiak Festival, with the tomb owner and his family standing in the attitude of adoration in front of Sokar-Osiris and Osiris. The approximate dating is to the Roman period, possibly to the reign of Trajan.

**Keywords:** Dakhla Oasis, Mut, Bir el-Shaghala, Petophois's tomb, tomb with a Pyramidal Superstructure, Khoiak Festival.

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## RÉSUMÉ

Cet article présente les résultats des fouilles d'une tombe (n° 5) découverte récemment à Bir el-Shaghala, une nécropole de l'oasis de Dakhla. Cette tombe appartenait à un certain Petophoïs, ou Padioupouaout, un des membres les plus importants de l'élite de la société de Mothis (Mut). La superstructure de la tombe comprend deux pièces et un couloir qui conduit à la chambre de pyramide, qui est la partie principale de la superstructure de cette sépulture. Ces trois éléments architecturaux composaient l'espace funéraire réservé aux visiteurs. La structure souterraine comprenait une antichambre rectangulaire au plafond cintré et une chambre funéraire. Du plafond voûté de la chambre funéraire, une petite ouverture raccordée à un conduit traverse les infrastructures du côté sud et aboutit à une autre ouverture sur la face extérieure du mur sud. La majorité des décorations et des textes de cette tombe apportent des éclairages précieux sur les 24<sup>e</sup>, 25<sup>e</sup> et 26<sup>e</sup> jours de la fête de Khoiak ; le défunt et sa famille sont, d'ailleurs, représentés en adoration devant Sokar-Osiris et Osiris. On peut dater cette tombe de l'époque romaine, probablement du règne de Trajan.

**Mots clés :** Oasis de Dakhla, Mut, Bir el-Shaghala, tombe de Petophoïs/Padioupouaout, tombe à superstructure pyramidale, fête de Khoiak.



THE Egyptian Supreme Council of Antiquities conducted an excavation project in Bir el-Shaghala<sup>1</sup> (fig. 1) until 2010; the work was carried out by a team of archaeologists from the inspectorate of El-Dakhla under the supervision of Maher Bashendi and Magdi Ibrahim. Bir el-Shaghala is a Greco-Roman site situated about three kilometres to the west of Mut, the ancient and modern capital of Dakhla Oasis. Its main topographical feature consists of a hill which is surrounded by a group of further hills being the archaeological sites Tell el-Marqula, Kom Bishai and Mut el-Kharab.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The excavation project of the Egyptian Supreme Council of Antiquities in Bir el-Shaghala Necropolis was carried out over 16 seasons from 2002 till 2010. Twenty tombs have been explored, and the most important of them are published. For Tomb 2, see BASHENDI 2013, pp. 51–79. For Tomb 1, see ASHOUR et al. 2020, pp. 1–60; BAGNALL, VITTMANN, CRIBIORE 2015, pp. 335–349.

<sup>2</sup> For a recent and detailed study of the architectural layout of the tombs, see CARTON 2012; IBRAHIM, ASHOUR 2019, pp. 313–320.

Photo: Mahmoud Ibrahim



FIG. 1. Bir el-Shaghala necropolis landscape view.

## I. THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE TOMB

### I.1. The superstructure

[FIGS. 2–4]

The team had chosen an area measuring 10m north-south by 8.5m east-west for a full archaeological investigation in Bir el-Shaghala necropolis. After the removal of the surface debris, consisting of sand and mud brick rubble, a series of courses of mud brick walls were exposed, still reaching a height of approximately 1.10m (fig. 3).



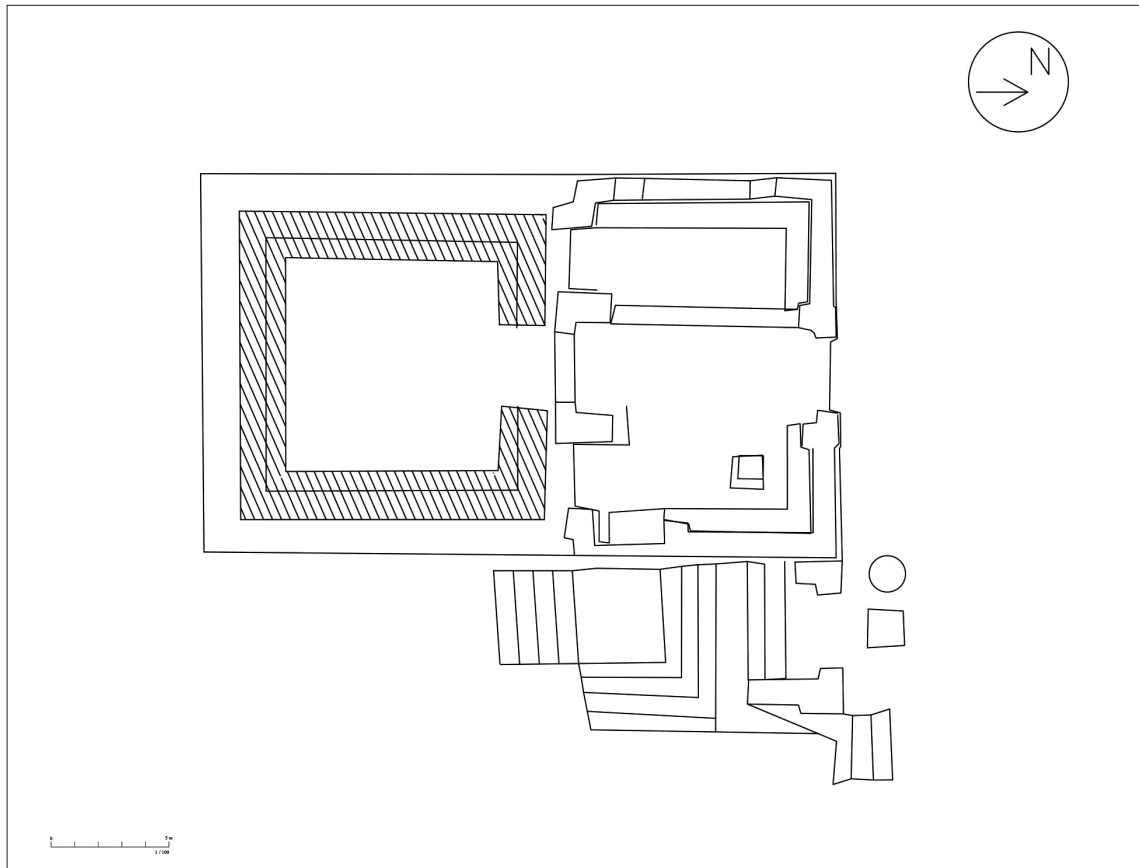


FIG. 2. Bir el Shaghala, Tomb 5: superstructure, plan.

These walls represent the remains of two chambers and a rectangular hall that could be identified as the superstructure of a tomb, which functioned as a funerary chapel for the tomb's visitors (fig. 4). The only remains of material culture that the team retrieved from the fill of the two chambers and the hall were a small quantity of human bone fragments, two painted terracotta lamps and a pottery bowl that could be dated to the second half of the 5th century AD. (fig. 5). The three architectural units were built above the vaulted antechamber as part of the subterranean structures. The upper floor is accessible from the main west-east street<sup>3</sup> via an entrance flanked by two jambs built in mud brick and originally coated with a layer of lime plaster. The left jamb measures 51cm wide by 105cm in depth while the right one measures 51cm wide by 85cm in depth. The entrance between the two jambs is 113cm in width. In front of the entrance to the funerary chapel, an altar could be identified, which was built out of mud bricks without any traces of remaining plaster coating, measuring 44cm long by 46cm wide and 51cm high<sup>4</sup> (fig. 4). The entrance gives access to a rectangular hall measuring 357cm long by 144cm wide. In its south edge, behind the entrance of the pyramid chamber, a hole was dug by robbers to go down into the subterranean structures.

<sup>3</sup> This street leads also to the funerary chapels of Tombs 1, 2, 7, 7A, and 9; IBRAHIM, ASHOUR 2019, p. 321.

<sup>4</sup> These altars are usually seen in front of and inside the funerary chapels. They are built of mud brick with a white layer of plaster coating, although they sometimes have an upper surface of stone; see IBRAHIM, ASHOUR 2019, p. 321.

Photo: Mahmoud Ibrahim



FIG. 3. Bir el-Shaghala, Tomb 5: the superstructure filled with sand and debris.

Photo: Mahmoud Ibrahim



FIG. 4. Bir el-Shaghala, Tomb 5: the superstructure entrance.



Photo: Mahmoud Ibrahim



FIG. 5. Two terracotta lamps and a pottery bowl found in the sand fill.

Photo: Mahmoud Ibrahim



FIG. 6. Vault of the antechamber of the substructure penetrated by robbers.

Photo: Mahmoud Ibrahim



FIG. 7. The socket for the portcullis slab.

This robbers' hole measures 157cm long by 104cm wide. It leads directly to the entrance of the burial chamber (fig. 6). The already mentioned rectangular hall of the superstructure is flanked by two chambers on both sides, one toward the east and the other one to the west. It seems that their entrances were closed at a later stage. The door to the right chamber clearly shows this change, while in the left chamber remains of a wall are still present, which marks the extension to the left jamb of the entrance of the pyramid. The first east chamber measures 389cm long by 170cm wide. There is an altar of mud brick measuring 43cm long by 40cm wide and 65cm high, which occupied the northern part of it. A few steps in front of it, above the subterranean entrance, is a tall and narrow socket which penetrates the east wall, measuring 180cm north-south by 15cm east-west (fig. 7). It was used to close the subterranean door by a portcullis slab measuring approximately 130cm in height, which slid inside in ancient times. It was found broken in different parts in the debris and sand. The use of portculli was the prevailing technique used for closing tombs in the cemeteries of Bir el-Shaghala and some other necropolises in Dakhla Oasis.<sup>5</sup> On the opposite side there is a similar chamber measuring 375cm by 187cm. Four benches measuring 40cm in width run the length of the chamber walls. The width and the shape of these benches suggest that they functioned originally as mastabas for seating the funerary visitors (fig. 8).

Behind the robber's hole there is an entrance of which two jambs of mud brick are remaining. The right one measures 88cm wide by 128cm high while the left one measures 94cm wide by 134cm high. The door leads to the chamber inside the pyramid<sup>6</sup>, which is the most prominent element of the superstructure of the tomb complex.

<sup>5</sup> HOPE, MCKENZIE 1999, pl. 4; IBRAHIM, ASHOUR 2019, p. 321.

<sup>6</sup> A close parallel to this layout in Dakhla Oasis is attested in the Amheida necropolis, see WARNER 2004–2005, p. 65, fig. 5:2; KAPER 2015, pp. 171–174. For other parallels outside Dakhla Oasis, see CARTRON 2012, pp. 19–20; BRUYÈRE 1929, pp. 134–135, pl. XIII; BRUYÈRE 1925, pl. VI.

It seems that also this entrance had been blocked later. This blocking was built out of mud bricks and coated with mud plaster (figs. 8, 9). Unfortunately, the descending steps, which led to the chamber inside the pyramid, were destroyed by the builders who blocked the entrance when there was no need to access the pyramid any more.<sup>7</sup> The chamber inside the pyramid measures approximately 3.82m north-south by 3.90m east-west with preserved walls to a height of 1.27m and 0.75m width.



Photo: Mahmoud Ibrahim

FIG. 8. Left and right antechamber inside the front hall.

<sup>7</sup> For an ideal parallel, see IBRAHIM, ASHOUR 2020. The same blockage is clearly seen in the Tomb 1: ASHOUR et al. 2020, p. 9.



The angle of the pyramid's inclination indicates that the original height of the pyramid was about 7.5m. In light of this, the pyramid is considered to be the largest in the necropolis, and second in the entire oasis.<sup>8</sup> It reflects the social rank of the tomb owner, who was one of the most important members of the elite society of Mothis (Mut). The door that gives access to the chamber inside the pyramid is located at the north side and measures 105cm between the two jambs. A niche-like recess is located in the middle of the west wall measuring 63cm high by 60cm wide. Based on the location, the size and the shape of this recess, we suggest that it functioned originally as a window or as an entrance which was blocked later (fig. 9). The pyramid of Terenouthis provides us with a parallel that may suggest its use as a cultic niche.<sup>9</sup> The south wall is distinguished with a niche measuring 50cm high by 30cm wide (fig. 9). The walls and the two jambs inside the chamber were covered with a thick layer of white plaster, of which substantial remains are still preserved.



Photo: Mahmoud Ibrahim

**FIG. 9.** The western niche and the southern air hole inside the pyramidal chamber.

<sup>8</sup> The cemetery of Amheida contains a larger pyramid, see KAPER 2015, pp. 112–114. See also the pyramid tombs of Tuna al-Gebel (KESSLER, BROSE 2008); Térénouthis/Kôm Abou Billou (DHENNIN 2011, p. 123, fig. 5); Padineith's tomb at the Assassif cemetery, dated to the Late Period (EIGNER 1984, pp. 102–105, fig. 75, pl. 40c). For the earlier Theban tombs from the 19th and 20th dynasties and their pyramids: KAMPP 1996, pp. 95–109. The room inside these pyramids created structural problems, which were solved by earth fillings or by a vault building to secure the superstructure from collapsing: ASHOUR et al. 2020, p. 10.

<sup>9</sup> IBRAHIM, ASHOUR 2019, p. 321; CARTRON 2012, pp. 19, 272, fig. 242.



## 1.2. The subterranean structures

[FIGS. 10–13]

The tomb can be reached from the south via a straight descending staircase of eight steps leading to a door on the right-hand side. The staircase continues further as it also gives access to the neighbouring tomb no. 6. All of the steps, which measure 118cm in length, are built out of mud brick and coated with a thick layer of lime plaster. The eighth step is extended in width and forms a platform in front of the entrance to the tomb. The entrance to the staircase of Tombs 5 and 6 is still flanked by two mud brick jambs, which are coated with a thick layer of lime plaster (fig. 14). The left side is still preserved in its entire height, while from the right one the upper part is lost. In front of the two jambs stands a rectangular sandstone altar measuring 51cm long by 51cm wide and 85cm high, and to its right is a cylindrical mud brick altar measuring 57cm high, which is coated with mud plaster (figs. 14, 15). A contemporary completely preserved altar with a cupola top and a small rectangular libation table were found inside the large arched niche in front of the entrance to Tomb 6 (fig. 15). These remains provide a useful glimpse into the funerary practices at that time.

Another entrance to the tomb has been discovered from the same street. Four steps form here the original entrance of Tombs 5 and 9 (fig. 14). These steps, which measure 29cm in width, lead to a small open court, which itself gives access to a descending staircase of eight steps leading to the tomb; each step here is L-shaped. The location of this staircase suggests that this was the old entrance giving access to the tomb before the owner of Tomb 6 began to build his burial complex including the large staircase. This staircase created a new and additional entrance to the tomb. The outer entrance door of the tomb consists of two sandstone jambs measuring 114 × 62cm, and a lintel 15cm high and 133cm wide. It is inscribed with large Greek majuscule letters and a demotic text (fig. 16). Inscriptions in Greek and demotic above an entrance are not attested elsewhere in the Bir el-Shaghala tombs.<sup>10</sup>

The Greek text:

Ἀπολλώνιε ἀγαθώτατε  
χαῖρε

Excellent Apollonios, farewell.

The demotic text:

*P3 mhr P3-di-wpy s3 P3i-sth nty iw.w dd n.f 3pwlyns mwt.f T3-šr-p3y-ʿrʿr ʿnh b3.f nhb dt*

The pyramid of Petophois son of Pisechthis, who is called Apollonios, his mother is Senpelilis. May his *ba* live for ever and ever”.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> For a detailed study of the architectural facades features inside Bir el-Shaghala see IBRAHIM, ASHOUR 2019, pp. 322–324.

<sup>11</sup> The Greek and demotic texts above the entrance are completely translated with commentary and notes in BAGNALL, VITTMANN, CRIBIORE 2015, pp. 335–343.

Crossing the narrow socket that penetrates the east wall of the entrance, there are two pivot holes cutting in the upper threshold and the floor, to the right, which were used to put a wooden door, possibly cedar. Wood decay remains are still seen inside the two holes, it could be a result of termite damage. A small tiny bench runs along the right wall of the entrance and may fit perfectly the actual width of the original wooden door. Behind the door five flat mud bricks steps measuring 17cm wide by 62cm long (fig. 17) with remains of white plaster coating give access to a rectangular antechamber with a vaulted ceiling<sup>12</sup>, which is orientated north-south (figs. 17–18).

The dimensions of this largely undecorated antechamber are 1.81m north-south by 3.84m east-west.

It is constructed of mud bricks and coated with white plaster. The maximum height of the vaulted ceiling measures 2m. Its southern wall has been divided into two parts. The upper one forms a lunette shape with round arch ceiling, while a protruding bench occupied the lower part (fig. 18). This protruding bench was possibly used to store the funerary objects, such as the glass vessel that was found nearby and dating from the second half of the first century. The floor is still paved with sandstone blocks.<sup>13</sup>

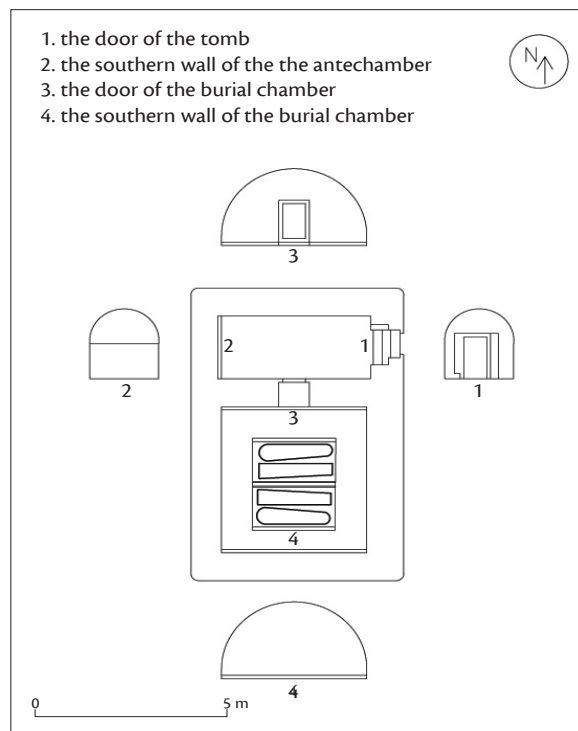


FIG. 10. Bir el-Shaghala, Tomb 5, The subterranean structures.

<sup>12</sup> Many tombs in Beyout al-Quraysh in Dakhla Oasis near Kellis have rooms with vaulted ceilings, which were also common in the tombs of Kellis, see: HOPE, MCKENZIE 1999, pp. 53–67; HOPE 2003, p. 252, fig. 12. For other parallels outside Dakhla Oasis, see: PADRÓ 2007, p. 129, fig. 10.2; EL-NAGGAR 1999, pp. 366–367.

<sup>13</sup> For this technique in other tombs of Bir el-Shaghala, see IBRAHIM, ASHOUR 2019, p. 320.

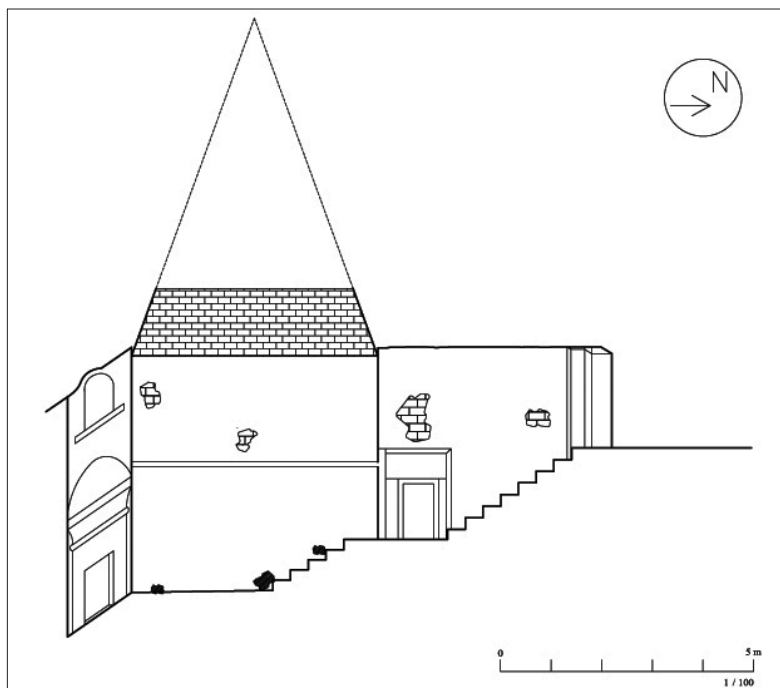


FIG. 11. Bir el-Shaghala, Tomb 5, section S/N of the tomb.

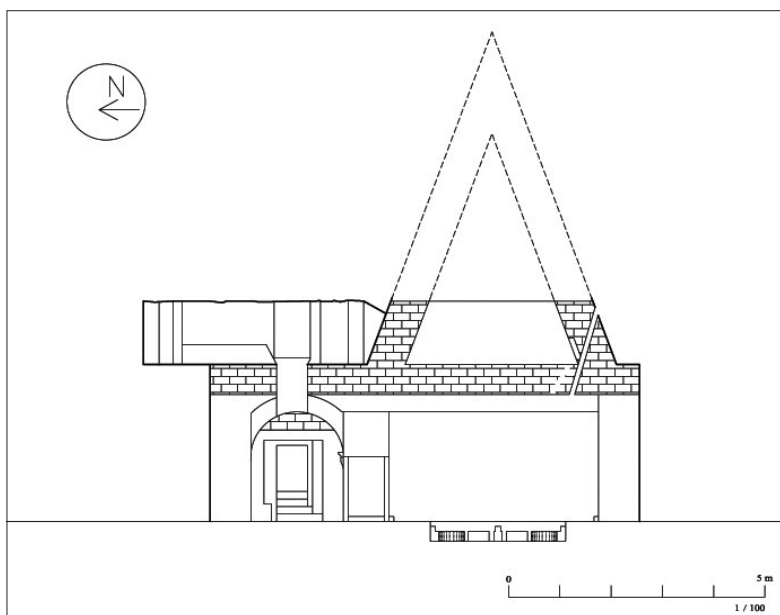


FIG. 12. Bir el-Shaghala, Tomb 5, Eastern section.

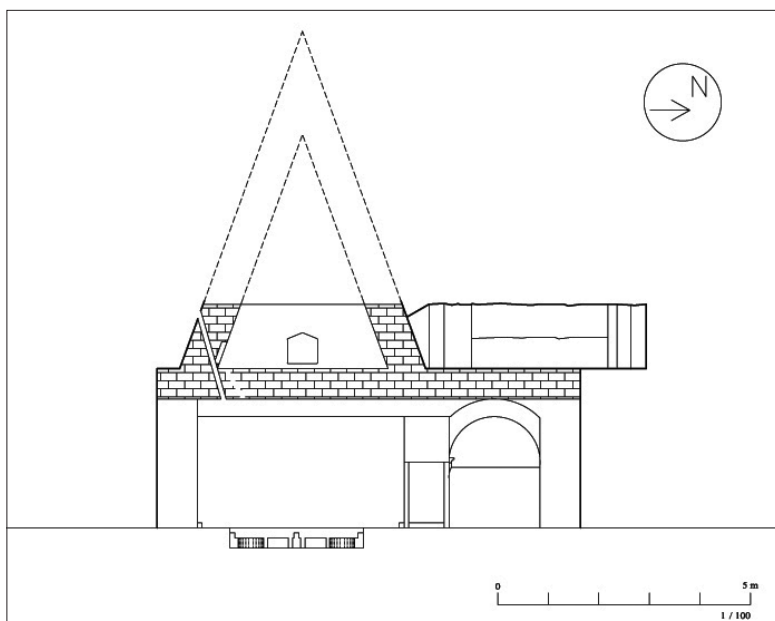


FIG. 13. Bir el-Shaghala, Tomb 5, Western section.



Photo: Mahmoud Ibrahim

FIG. 14. The original entrance of Tomb 5.



A door in the west wall of the vaulted antechamber gives access to the burial chamber (fig. 19). Two pivot holes were cut in the upper threshold and the floor to the right side. The entrance was surely closed by a wooden door. A small hole was dug in the center of the right inside wall of the entrance, which was mainly used to close the door with a wooden bolt (figs. 24–25). This door measures 114cm in height and 62cm in width, while the burial chamber itself measures 4.20m north-south by 3.75m east-west and has a height of about 2.40m. The decorated burial chamber, in contrast to the other rooms of the burial complex, is constructed of sandstone blocks, which are coated with a layer of gypsum and paint. A sandstone rectangular sarcophagus occupied the middle of the burial chamber. It measures 1.55m long by 0.61m wide and 1m high. One side was penetrated by robbers in modern times. The removal of the surface debris on the floor brought to light four ceramic coffins covered with sandstone slabs (fig. 20). Unfortunately, the skeletal remains were scattered due to the intense looting by the looters and the excavation team moved them from their original places without examined or photographed. A narrow wall measuring 2m long by 0.34m wide was built between the first and the second pair of coffins.

It is notable that the four coffins are placed beside each other: an oval one, followed by two rectangular shapes and another oval at the end. The size of all sarcophagi takes a wide form at the west while it becomes narrow at the eastern end. This confirms that all the mummies' heads were directed towards the west. Unfortunately, the skeletons were moved from their original places before being recorded or studied. One important remark concerns the burial process of the four sarcophagi in this tomb: it seems to have been a unique method, which started with the digging of a special pit at the level of the bedrock for each sarcophagus. Then the sarcophagi were embedded in their pits. After that, the mummies were put in place and their coffins were covered with limestone slabs topped by another slab, to the north, which at the same time served as a ground floor for the burial chamber. Parts of these slabs are visible in the upper edges of the truncated area and the vaulted antechamber (fig. 18). These features explain the method used to cover the sarcophagi. It seems that the ends of each slab were inserted into these holes to prevent the slab from moving.

According to the inscriptions, there are only three persons buried in this chamber. The two interior coffins contained the parents of the tomb owner, Tashertpayere and Pisechthis, while the exterior two were prepared for Padiwepwaut (Greek: Petophois) and his wife. In fact, the textual and iconographic evidence did not reveal any mention of a wife, so it seems possible that Padiwepwaut planned to establish his tomb during his life and either died before his



Photo: Mahmoud Ibrahim

FIG. 15. Steps leading to the entrance door to Tomb 5 (at the arrow). Photo: Mahmoud Ibrahim.



marriage or divorced between the construction of the tomb and his death. The east wall of the burial chamber reinforces this suggestion by depicting unnamed officiant performing a libation ritual for him and his parents. This scene allows two conclusions: a) this part of the decoration was added after the death of Padiwepwaut; b) he was single when he died and the artists depicted an unnamed officiant, perhaps a priest or family member, instead of his eldest son, who performs the funeral rituals for his parents and for himself.



FIG. 16.



FIG. 17.

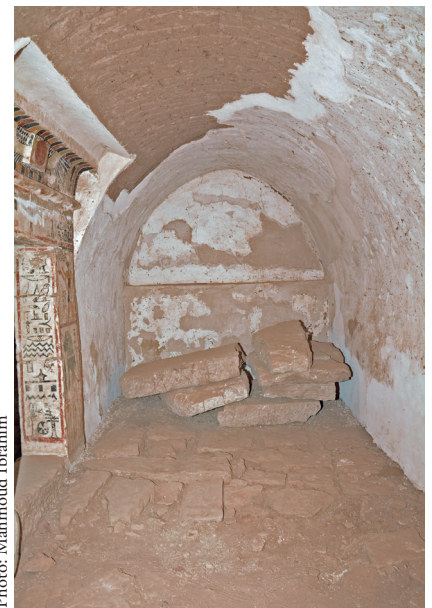


FIG. 18.

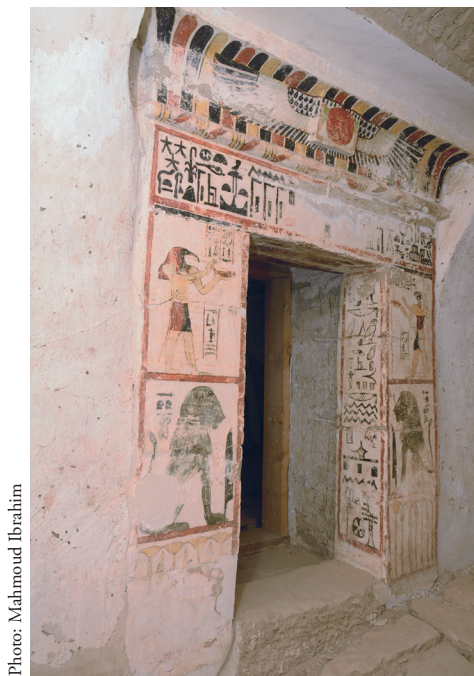


FIG. 19.



FIG. 20.

FIG. 16. Bir el-Shaghala Tomb 5, entrance to the substructure.

FIG. 17. Interior view of the entrance to the antechamber.

FIG. 18. Fragments of the portcullis slab collected in the restored antechamber.

FIG. 19. The entrance to the burial chamber.

FIG. 20. The four pottery coffins in the floor of the burial chamber.



Photo: Mahmoud Ibrahim



FIG. 21. A robber's hole and an air hole in the ceiling of the burial chamber.

Photo: Mahmoud Ibrahim



FIG. 22. The exterior opening of the air hole of the burial chamber.

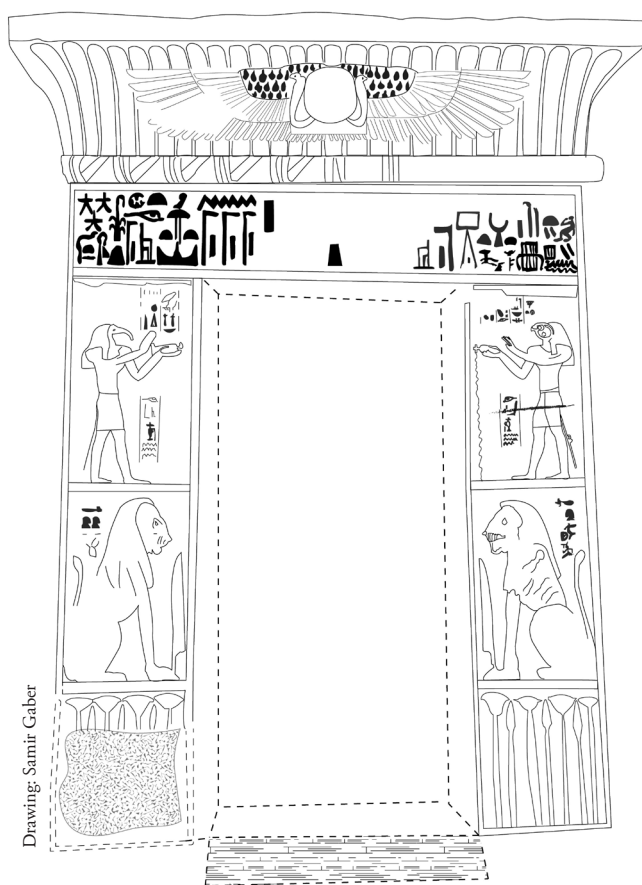


FIG. 23. Drawing of the entrance to the burial chamber.

An original hole was found in the vaulted ceiling measuring 9cm long by 7cm wide. It was connected to a long tube 2.22m long (fig. 21), running through the southern subterranean structure and leading to another shaft 50cm high and 30cm wide in the outside face of the south wall (fig. 22). It was designed to lead upwards as an air shaft. It is well known that this type of small shaft may have originally functioned as a pathway to allow a continuous flow of air into the subterranean structure or alternatively, it may point accurately to celestial areas or the night stars to guide the *ba* or the *akh* of the deceased to his ultimate destination among the ancestors in their permanent resting place in the sky.<sup>14</sup> This symbolic spirit shaft is most suitably located in the place of the vaulted ceiling, which is entirely covered with stars and a row of sun discs running from south to north. In his study about the pyramid shafts, Anthony P. Sakovich refuted the suggestion that they are ventilation shafts or spirit shafts, and he argued that they served as a passage connecting the southern edge of the Nile's celestial counterpart, through

the burial chamber, and the other northern end of the Great Waterway.<sup>15</sup> The air hole is not common elsewhere in contemporary tombs inside or outside the Oasis of Dakhla.

## 2. THE DECORATION OF THE TOMB

### 2.1. The entrance

The lintel of the entrance door into the burial chamber is surmounted by an Egyptian cavetto cornice<sup>16</sup>, which is decorated with a winged solar disc painted in red, yellow and dark blue. Two uraei with curved bodies emerge from the lower part of the sun disc, and they flank the sun disc in front of the wings.<sup>17</sup> It seems that the solar disc was not finished in relief, and it is rendered

<sup>14</sup> For a detailed study of the shafts in Khufu's pyramid at Giza, see: SAKOVICH 2005–2006, pp. 1–12; WALL 2007, pp. 199–206.

<sup>15</sup> SAKOVICH 2005–2006, p. 12.

<sup>16</sup> A close parallel to this style can be seen in the Tomb 2: BASHENDI 2013, p. 74, fig. 16.

<sup>17</sup> Another parallel from Tomb 1 can be cited with certainty, see ASHOUR et al. 2020, p. 20.



in paint on a rectangular element reserved for it. Abstract forms of vertical palm leaves are painted alternately in dark blue, red, and yellow and cover the entire cavetto cornice behind the winged sun disc. The horizontal torus below the cavetto cornice is painted in yellow and red, according to the decoration pattern typical for the tombs at Bir el-Shaghala. The decoration of the cornice with all its artistic details is characteristic of type (E) according to the classification of Youssri Abdelwahed.<sup>18</sup> The lintel of the burial chamber doorway is framed above and below by a red line enclosing two symmetrical texts above the entrance. It is only partly preserved on either side and can be read from the centre both to the left and right (figs. 19, 23).

Left side: [...] *n nṯrw imntt Wsṯr nswt nṯrw ḥkꜣ dt*

[...] of the gods of the west<sup>19</sup>, Osiris king of the gods, ruler of eternity.

Right side: [...] *Wsṯr Pꜣ-dꜣ-wp-wꜣwt ms n Tꜣ-šr(.t) pꜣ-rꜣr*

[...] Osiris Padiwepwaut<sup>20</sup> who is born to Tashertpaerer.<sup>21</sup>

The two jambs (fig. 23) are constructed of sandstone blocks. The decorations are completely preserved on a thin layer of plaster. Each jamb is outlined with painted red lines attached to the lintel frame and divided by horizontal red lines into three symmetrical registers. On the top of each of them is a long painted sign of the sky in black color. On both sides, the uppermost register has a near identical scene showing Thoth with an ibis head on the left and Horus with a hawk's head on the right, wearing a tripartite wig, a short kilt with a ceremonial tail, looking toward the doorway and performing libation rites. Each of them holds a *ḳḅḥw*-vessel and pours water for purification with one hand while his other is lifted in a gesture of protection.<sup>22</sup> The two gods are purifying whoever enters the tomb, as is also known from the entrances of temples in Dakhla Oasis.<sup>23</sup> Four columns of texts accompany Horus while only two are inscribed for Thoth.<sup>24</sup>

The text relating to Thoth reads:

*ṯr(.t) ḳḅḥw*

Pouring a libation.

*Dḥwty ꜥ ꜥ nb Ḥmnw dꜣ ꜥnh*

Djehuty, the twice great, lord of Hermopolis, who gives life.

<sup>18</sup> ABDELWAHED 2015, fig. 147.

<sup>19</sup> The writing of the word “west” with the city determinative serves as an indication to the necropolis of Mut to the west of the town. See a typical writing with Anubis on the west wall of the burial chamber. The two words clearly occurred together on the south wall as *imntt n Mṯt*.

<sup>20</sup> For this name which means “He whom Upuaut (the god of Lykopolis/Assiut) has given”, see RAFFAELLA, VITTMANN, BAGNALL 2015, p. 340; LÜDDECKENS et al. 1980–2000, p. 297.

<sup>21</sup> BAGNALL, VITTMANN, CRIBIORE 2015, pp. 336, 343, note (e); LÜDDECKENS et al. 1980–2000, p. 1096.

<sup>22</sup> The vessel held by Thoth on the left side is shown without the water pouring from it.

<sup>23</sup> KAPER 1995, pp. 108, 114.

<sup>24</sup> The closest parallels are found in the outer entrance of the tomb of Djed-Amun.ef-ankh from the Late Period (FAKHRY 1942, p. 74, fig. 33), the doorway of the burial chamber of Ba-en-nentiu and on the entrance of the second chamber of Thaty's tomb in Bahria Oasis (FAKHRY 1942, p. 125, figs. 93–94).

The text relating to Horus reads:

*ir(.t) kbhw*

Pouring a libation.

*[Hr] s3 [3st] s3 Wsir nb Hm*

[Horus], son of [Isis]<sup>25</sup>, son of Osiris, lord of Letopolis.<sup>26</sup>

The lower registers depict one of the tomb's guardians, the demon Great-of-Strength, who was closely associated with the god Tutu.<sup>27</sup> The demon is depicted on both sides as a seated lion looking towards the door opening, and holding a long vertical black knife<sup>28</sup> between his front paws. Identical lions are depicted on a side door of the temple of Hathor at Philae, where they remain anonymous.<sup>29</sup> The short legend describes him as:

*3 phty spr sbiw.*

Great-of-strength,<sup>30</sup> who overthrows the rebels.<sup>31</sup>

The lower register provides decorative elements consisting of lotus and papyrus flowers.<sup>32</sup>  
*The two thicknesses and the ceiling* (figs. 25–26)

Passing the entrance, both thicknesses have an invocation text to Thoth on the left side (fig. 24) and to Horus on the right side to purify the deceased's offerings coming from the lands of Busiris and Abydos (fig. 25). The ceiling partly exceeds the width of the doorway,<sup>33</sup> and shows Nekhbet as a vulture with outspread wings, possibly crowned by an atef-crown, holding *sn*-signs and *hw*-fans, positioned horizontally, in her claws.<sup>34</sup> The other part of the ceiling is entirely covered with stars (fig. 26).<sup>35</sup>

<sup>25</sup> The remaining signs strongly suggest these titles; for a comparable text, see the west wall of the burial chamber. See also the south wall of the western funerary chamber of Tomb 2: BASHENDI 2013, p. 66, fig. 28.

<sup>26</sup> Capital of the second nome of Lower Egypt. Horus was its principal god; *LGG* III, p. 715.

<sup>27</sup> For a parallel see BASHENDI 2013, fig. 17. He is also depicted on the south wall of the burial chamber as a human figure with a lion's head, as also in Tomb 1, see ASHOUR et al. 2020, p. 21. In Tomb 2 two sitting ladies act as doorway guardians with knives upright in their two hands: BASHENDI 2013, p. 57, fig. 16. The same role is seen with Anubis as a crouching black jackal facing the door as attested in Bir el-Shaghala tombs, see, for example, BASHENDI 2013, p. 60, fig. 17. On the relation of Great-of-Strength with Tutu, cf. KAPER 2003, pp. 61–62.

<sup>28</sup> One of the texts describing Tutu in the pronaos of Philae relates to the protective role of the knife “who has wielded the sword against his enemy”, KAPER 2003, p. 232.

<sup>29</sup> DILS 2014, pp. 905–907, pl. 23–24.

<sup>30</sup> Horus also bears this title on the northern wall of the antechamber of Tomb 1, see ASHOUR et al. 2020, p. 21.

<sup>31</sup> The suggested reading of the sign is *sbiw* or *hftyw*, *LGG* VI, pp. 584–585; KAPER 2003, p. 229. It occurs twice, in the opposite side and on the west wall of the burial chamber, but unfortunately each of these places is faded and damaged.

<sup>32</sup> This decorative style is one of the essential components that is commonly used in the lower registers (soubassement) in the decoration of most Ptolemaic temples, especially upon the entrances of halls and chambers; see for example *Edfou* IX, pl. XXXIVa–b, XXXVb, XXXIXe, and in general DILS 2014, pp. 882–895.

<sup>33</sup> This architectural layout appears to have been mainly inspired by the entrances of the Greco-Roman temples.

<sup>34</sup> The closest parallel can be seen in the antechamber of Tomb 2 in the lower floor: BASHENDI 2013, fig. 22. Also the eastern funerary chamber of Tomb 1: ASHOUR et al. 2020, fig. 7. As a favourite choice in the ceiling of the burial chamber, see the tomb of Siamun in Siwa Oasis: VENIT 2016, fig. 4.40. In the Greco-Roman Temples, *Edfou* IX, pl. XXXIXa, XLi.

<sup>35</sup> This style is unique to this tomb, and there are no comparable examples elsewhere in the necropolis to this day. For a parallel from Bahria Oasis, see FAKHRY 1942, p. 63, fig. 24.





FIG. 24. The left thickness of the door and the interior wall of the entrance of the burial chamber.

The text relating to Thoth reads:

*ii n.k Dḥwty ʿ3 ʿ3 wr di n.k kbḥw n hr ḥtpw Ddw ʿ3bdw ʿk.k r [ḥrt ḥn nṯrw]*

Thoth, the twice great god,<sup>36</sup> comes to you and he gives for you cool water on the offering tables of Busiris and Abydos, [may you enter the sky with the gods].<sup>37</sup>

On the inner wall of the entrance, on the left hand, Hathor is shown as a female deity with a cow's head, wearing a broad collar, a tight-fitting dress that uncovers her breast, crowned with a disc and horns with two ostrich feathers emerging upwards from the disc. She also holds a large key in her right hand while her other hand is resting on her thigh. This aspect of Hathor shows the goddess in her role as the lady of the west who will open the Underworld to give a safe path to the deceased with her key.<sup>38</sup> Above her, there is a probable representation of the sky sign in black. In front of her are three text columns; two of them are filled with texts while the third one is left blank.

<sup>36</sup> A part of this title is damaged, but it is already attested for Thoth in Tomb 2, see BASHENDI 2013, p. 66; *LGG* II, p. 16.

<sup>37</sup> Although the inscription in this part is mostly faded and unreadable, the upper bandeau inscription on the east wall and the accompanying columns of Padiwepwaut on the same wall give exact parallels.

<sup>38</sup> This is the only figure of Hathor in the Bir el-Shaghala Necropolis to this day. The cow-headed Hathor also appears in the tomb of Katenos: OSING 1982, pl. 18a. For other parallels see GRIMM 1974, p. 117; MORENZ 1972, pp. 79–83; KURTH 1990, pp. 1, 11, pl. 6.1; and RIGGS 2005, p. 128. From the beginning of the Ptolemaic period Anubis is commonly shown as a crouching black jackal with a key tied around his neck, but Hathor begins to play this role from the 1st century AD onwards; PARLASCA 2010, p. 225.

*Nbt imntt wrt [...] nb(t) n Hm ir(t) s n P3-di-[w3wt]  
dd mdw in nbt imntt wrt.*

Lady of the west, the great one, [...], lady in Letopolis, who provides protection to Padiwep[waut].  
Words spoken by the lady of the west, the great one.

The text relating to Horus reads:

*ii n.k Hr s [3st] s Wsir r w3h.k mw hr htpw 3bdw Ddw*

Horus, son of [Isis], son of Osiris comes to you to pour water for you on the offering tables  
of Abydos and Busiris.

As for the inner wall of the entrance, on the right hand, it is badly deteriorated, so it is  
difficult to present anything about its content.



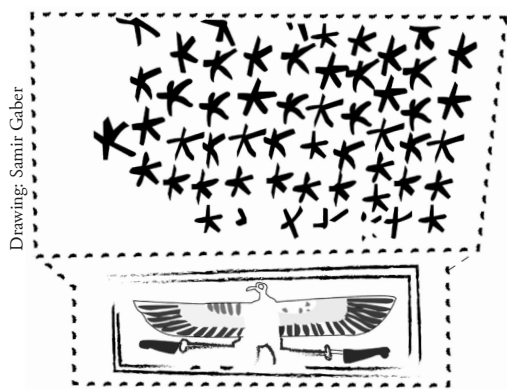
Photo: Mahmoud Ibrahim



FIG. 25. The right thickness of the door and the interior wall of entrance of the burial chamber.



Photo: Mahmoud Ibrahim



Drawing: Samir Gaber

FIG. 26. Bir el-Shaghala Tomb 5, the ceiling of the entrance of the burial chamber.

## 2.2. Interior walls of the burial chamber

The elongated burial chamber with its finely executed plastered and painted walls makes the tomb of Padiwepwaut the most proficiently and lavishly decorated tomb in the Bir el-Shaghala Necropolis. The decoration was spread over a total of three registers on all walls in addition to the ceiling. The artist relied on a grid pattern to make a sketch in red, and then drew the final outline in black, according to the traditional method of Pharaonic art. This is clearly visible in different parts on the tomb's walls. In the following section we will treat each register on the four walls as a single unit.

### *First register*

[FIG. 27]

This lowest portion is an undecorated space with a red border line above that continues to delineate each wall of the chamber.

### *Second register*

[FIG. 27]

It is bordered by a red line at the bottom and a continuous band of yellow stars on a black background forming a *pt*-sign at the top<sup>39</sup> and decorated as follows:

- The north wall

[FIG. 27]

The interior wall of the entrance that accommodates the door to the burial chamber, at eye level, is entirely decorated with a depiction of yellow anthropomorphized *ankh*-signs holding a red standard with a hanging band of cloth, alternating with red *was*-signs carrying a yellow standard, four on each side<sup>40</sup>. The northern corner of the east wall shows a fifth *was*. The presence of the first creator gods upon the standards was one of the main components of the Sokar and Osirian Khoiak Festivals<sup>41</sup> to impart a perfect circle of life, to bestow benefits and to ensure the survival of those who are buried in the tomb. Texts from the Edfu temple confirm that the standards bearing the divine insignia or hieroglyphic sign representing the god's name serve two main goals: the destruction of dangerous forces and the opening of the pathway to heaven, which was the final destination, in order to rejuvenate with the sun god.<sup>42</sup> These two goals are the hopes and aims of any deceased during his journey to reach the permanent resting place in the sky.

<sup>39</sup> See the same decorative style in Tuna el-Gebel tombs: VENIT 2016, fig. 4.13.

<sup>40</sup> Anthropomorphized *ankh* and *was* have strong affinities with the Khoiak festivals, see EATON 2006, p. 86, fig. 5.

<sup>41</sup> EATON 2006, p. 85, fig. 5; BIELESCH 2011, p. 21, fig. 7.

<sup>42</sup> *Edfou* I, pp. 556–557, pl. IX, XXXVIIIa-c.; *Edfou* I, pp. 563–564, pl. IX, XXXVIIIj. For the connection between these standards and the Khoiak festival, see WHITEHOUSE 1998, p. 258.

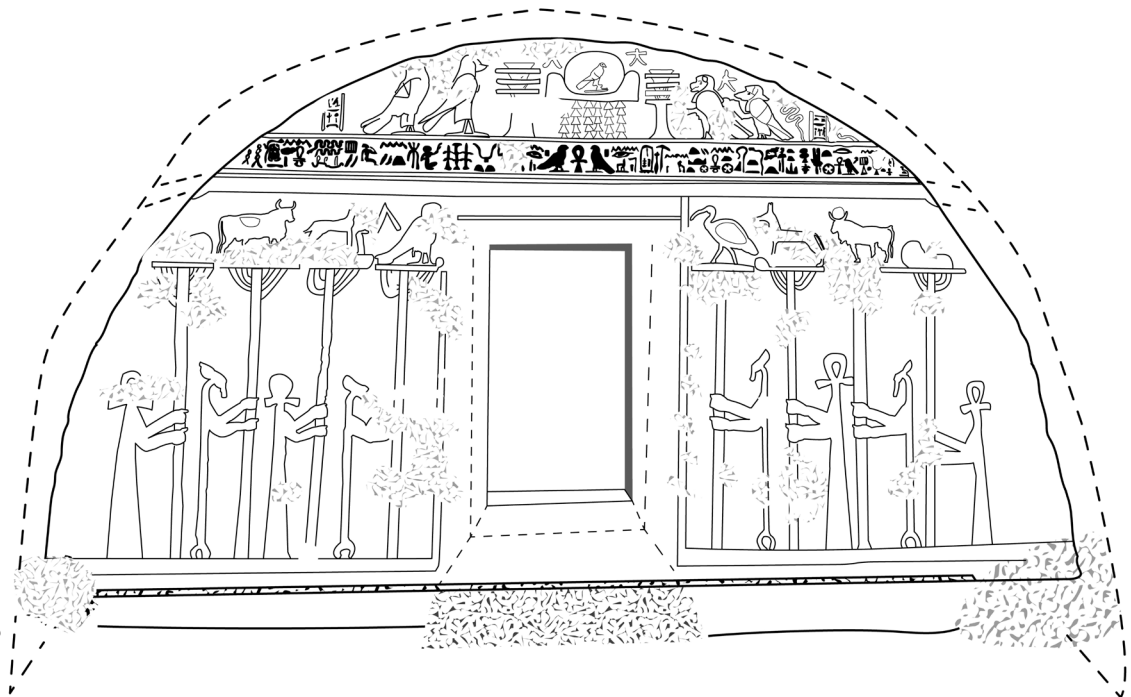


Photo: Mahmoud Ibrahim



a.

Drawing: Samir Gaber



b.

FIG. 27a-b. The north wall of the burial chamber.

## A. The right side

1. Thoth is painted in black with white wings upon a standard carried by a *was*.
2. Wepwawet<sup>43</sup> is damaged on the standard of an *ankh* but the left side provides a perfect parallel.
3. Apis is shown with a black skin and a red solar disc between his two horns upon a *was*-standard.
4. Khonsu<sup>44</sup> is carried by an *ankh*-standard.
5. Nefertum<sup>45</sup> is represented as two yellow ostrich feathers and a red sun disc centered on a *was*-standard. An additional green ostrich feather is added to the top of the standard.

## B. The left side

1. Horus<sup>46</sup> appears as a falcon with a partially damaged head and is painted in red and yellow upon a *was*-standard.
2. Wepwawet is partly damaged with an uraeus in front of him<sup>47</sup> on the standard of an *ankh*.
3. Apis is presentend with a black skin on a *was*-standard.
4. Khonsu is coloured brown upon an *ankh*-standard.

## ● The east wall

[FIGS. 28–30]

At the northern end of the east wall, an unnamed officiant and the god Anubis are shown facing right (south), approaching three seated persons representing the tomb's owner and his family. The officiant stands in a slightly bending position, wearing a white short kilt and a broad collar. He pours out a jug of water with his two hands in a libation ritual.

A winged sun disc hovers above his head, from which a uraeus hangs down between the inscription panel belonging to Anubis and that of the seated figure in front of him. Anubis has a jackal-head and a black skin; he wears a red and yellow short kilt, a red broad collar and a yellow tripartite wig. He holds a vessel in his left hand while his right hangs beside his body, holding a yellow *ankh*-sign.

1 *[dd mdw in] Inpw s3 Wsir ntr 3 2 nb n [smyt] hr imntt 3 [d3.f n.k krt] nfrt 3t mnht 4 [...]*  
*[n P3-d i]-wpw3wt ms n T3-šr.t -p3y-ʿrʿr*

1 [Word spoken by] Anubis, son of Osiris, the great god, 2 lord of [the Necropolis<sup>48</sup>] in the West<sup>49</sup>, 3 [who gives you], a beautiful, great and excellent [burial]<sup>50</sup> 4 [...] [to Padi]wepwaut who is born to Tashertpayerer.

<sup>43</sup> A standing jackal on a standard has strong affinities with the prow of the barque that contains the Osiris fetish at the Khoiak festival, see BIELESCH 2011, p. 21.

<sup>44</sup> For this reading see FAKHRY 1942, p. 68, fig. 27; *Edfou* I, p. 564, 3, pl. XXXVIIIj; *Edfou* I, p. 538, II, pl. XXXVIIa.

<sup>45</sup> This standard has strong affinities with the Sokar festival bark at Medinet Habu, see GABALLA, KITCHEN 1969, p. 8.

<sup>46</sup> Compare FAKHRY 1942, p. 68, fig. 28; GABALLA, KITCHEN 1969, p. 6, scene 5.

<sup>47</sup> For parallels, ASHOUR et al. 2020, fig. 45; FAKHRY 1942, p. 68, fig. 28.

<sup>48</sup> A close parallel to this completion is found with Osiris and Isis on the west wall.

<sup>49</sup> The signs in this portion are slightly unclear but they can be restored.

<sup>50</sup> The south wall depicts Anubis as *d3.f ʿuy r.k n krt 3t nfrt mnht hr imntt*. For other parallels see BASHENDI 2013, p. 65.



On the other side, there are three seated persons on lion-footed chairs on a podium. Each chair is also decorated with a hanging lion's tail, whose testicles are visible, and two decorative bands tied in the shape of a flower in the centre. The first seated figure depicts Padiwepwaut wearing a long yellow garment and a pectoral with the figure of a seated god around his neck. It is unclear what he is holding in his right hand. The traces suggest two parallel plants or twigs, perhaps myrtle, which is known from cartonnage masks and shrouds of Roman Egypt<sup>51</sup>. The hand of the second figure is even less distinct, but the third figure, that of his mother, holds a lotus flower in her hand. The left hand of all figures is placed upon their thigh. A *ba* bird with a human head and a red sun disc hovers above each head. The accompanying columns read:



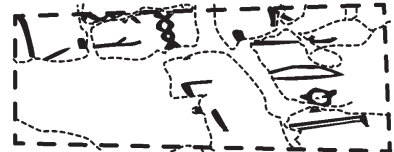
1 *h3.k wsir P3-dt-2wpw3wt ms n T3-sr.t-p3y3 'r' r 'k.k r hrt* 4 *hn' ntrw sm skr-5 Wsir hrt hrwa rnpy.k [m-]hnuw b3w* 6 *ntry ir b3.k sns n [m-]hnuw7 hb [mni h3t m]-hnuw Wsh t-m3't8 ts.w n.k m3h hnuw Hwt-df3w sm9.k r m33 hrt n snt hn' ntrw* 10 *w3h [pr.]k b3[k] hr h3t.*

1 Hail to you, Padi-2wepwat who was born of Tashert-pay-3erer, may you enter into heaven<sup>4</sup> with the gods that conduct Sokar-<sup>5</sup>Osiris every day, may you be rejuvenated among the divine bas,<sup>6</sup> may your<sup>52</sup> *ba* breathe among <sup>7</sup> the millions [of forerunners in the] hall of the righteous<sup>b</sup>,<sup>8</sup> may [they] tie on for you the fillet<sup>53</sup> within the Mansion of provisions, may you go<sup>9</sup> to see heaven on the sixth day with the gods<sup>c</sup>,<sup>10</sup> may your [tomb] endure and [your] *ba* being on the corpse<sup>d</sup>.

### Text Commentary





The following lines will provide the parallel sources that provided crucial information for the reconstruction of the above text. The parallels are based on facsimile versions which may give us some indication of the scribes in the Roman tombs of the Dakhla Oasis and their art. Remarkably, the same text is shown again in the upper bandeau inscription on the east wall of Tomb 5.

a. *'k.k r hrt hn' ntrw sm skr- Wsir hrt hrw*, the parallel sources of this line are:



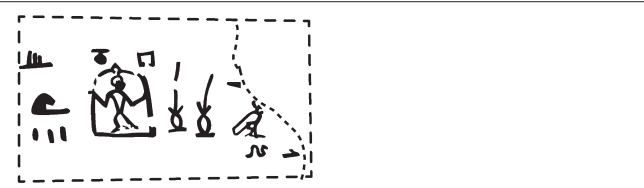

Tomb 5 in Bir el-Shaghala (upper bandeau inscription on the east wall)		
Tomb of Qtjnnws/Katenos in Ezbet Bashendi (text A)		Osing 1982, p. 64, pl. 66A.
Tomb of Petubastis in el-Muzawwaqa		Osing 1982, p. 80, pl. 70 [Decke A2].

<sup>51</sup> RIGGS 2005, pp. 93, 249.




<sup>52</sup> The badly preserved suffix pronoun *.k* is written by the sign S56.

<sup>53</sup> The other parallels are , OSING 1982, pl. 66A; , ASHOUR et al. 2020, fig. 37; , , Tomb 5 on the east wall and on the upper bandeau inscription on the west wall. The suggested readings are *mdh* "fillet, headband" (WILSON 1997, p. 483; *Wb* II, 190, 2–5), or *mh*, "garland, crown" (WILSON 1997, p. 451; *Wb* II, 131, 1–5; DAUMAS 1995, pp. 625–626).

- b. *rnpy.k [m-]h<sub>3</sub>w b<sub>3</sub>w n<sub>3</sub>ry ir b<sub>3</sub>.k snsn [m-]h<sub>3</sub>w h<sub>3</sub> [mni<sub>3</sub> h<sub>3</sub>t m]-h<sub>3</sub>w Wst-m<sub>3</sub>'t*, the parallel sources of this line are:

Tomb 5 in Bir el-Shaghala		
Tomb of Qtijnws/Katenos in Ezbet Bashendi (texts A, B)		Osing 1982, pl. 66A.
Tomb of Petubastis in el-Muzawwqa		Osing 1982, pl. 70 [Decke A2].
Tomb 1 in Bir el-Shaghala (3rd register on the south wall, partly preserved)		Ashour et al. 2020, fig. 37.

- c. *ts<sub>3</sub>w n.k m<sub>3</sub>h h<sub>3</sub>n<sub>3</sub>w Hwt-df<sub>3</sub>w šm.k r m<sub>3</sub> h<sub>3</sub>rt n snt h<sub>3</sub>n' n<sub>3</sub>rw*, the parallel sources of this line are:

Tomb 5 in Bir el-Shaghala (upper bandeau inscription on the west wall)		
Tomb of Qtijnws/Katenos in Ezbet Bashendi (texts B and A)		Osing 1982, pl. 66B and A.
Tomb 1 in Bir el-Shaghala (3rd register on the south wall, partly preserved)		Ashour et al. 2022, fig. 37.

- d. *w<sub>3</sub>h [pr.]k b<sub>3</sub> hr h<sub>3</sub>t*, the parallel source for this line is:


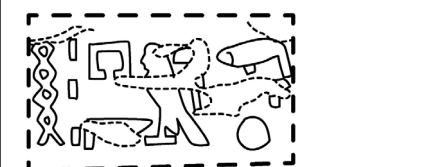
Tomb 5 in Bir el-Shaghala (upper bandeau inscription on the west wall)		
Tomb of Qtijnws/Katenos in Ezbet Bashendi (text A)		Osing 1982, pl. 66.



Photo: Mahmoud Ibrahim



FIG. 28. The east wall of the burial chamber, left part.

Photo: Mahmoud Ibrahim



FIG. 29. The east wall of the burial chamber, right part.



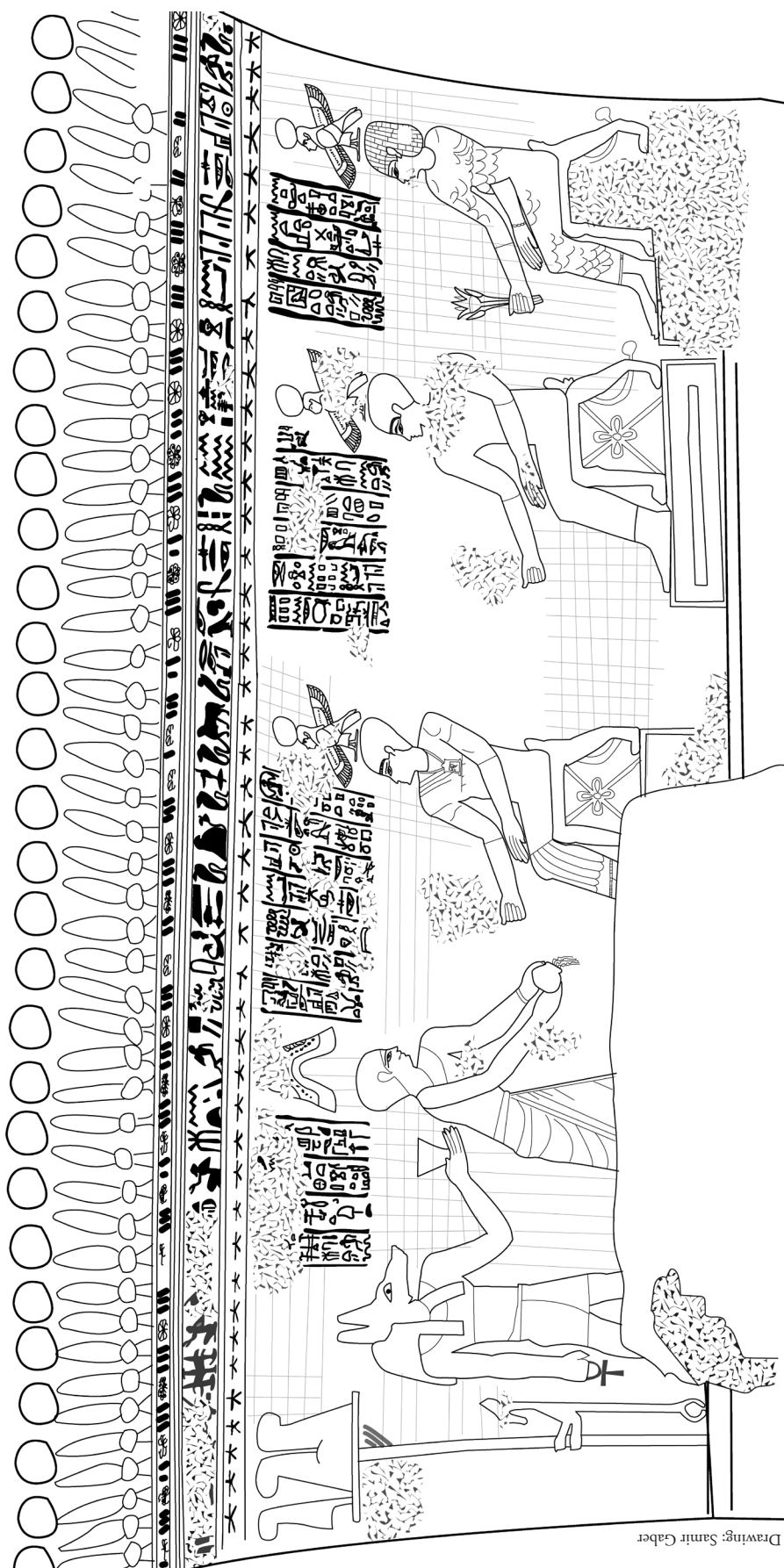


Fig. 30. Drawing of the east wall of the burial chamber.

The father of Padiwepwaut, Pisechthis, is shown behind his son, similar in appearance, but with black hair. The surface of his chest has been much damaged and there is no visible trace of a pectoral. Three accompanying inscription columns belong to him as follows:

<sup>1</sup> *h3 [Wsîr] P3y-stb s3 2 P3-di-wpw3wt ms n T3y-šr.t-3k3i*

<sup>1</sup> Hail [Osiris] Pisechthis<sup>54</sup> son of <sup>2</sup> Padiwepwaut, who is born from Tashert-<sup>3</sup>kai.<sup>55</sup>

Behind Pisechthis sits his wife, in a similar chair, with a tight-fitting yellow garment tied between her breasts, resembling the garment of Isis,<sup>56</sup> but decorated with a feather pattern. She wears a thin bracelet around her left wrist, while her right hand is depicted holding a lotus flower flanked by two lotus buds. The accompanying four text columns read:

<sup>1</sup> *h3 Ht-Hr T3-šr.t -p3y-ʿrʿr 2 ms n T3y-psdt iî.wy 3 n.t 3st wrt mwt-ntr dî.s 4 n.t k̄rst nfrt mnht hr imntt dt*

<sup>1</sup> Hail Hathor, Tashert-pay-erer <sup>2</sup> who is born to Tay-pesdjet, welcome, <sup>3</sup> to you! Isis, the great one, the god's Mother, she gives <sup>4</sup> to you a beautiful and excellent tomb in the west forever.

#### ● The west wall

[FIGS. 31–33]

##### I. Padiwepwaut and Apathes

The scene on this wall is complete and again displays an elaborate iconography. At the northern end of the wall, the deceased is depicted wearing a priestly garment. Underneath, a traditional kilt is visible, as worn also by the male gods, and his upper body is dressed in a short-sleeved-tunic. The kilt is covered with a fringed cloth. Similar images of priests from Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt are known.<sup>57</sup> He is shown with a long green unguent cone upon his head, which is also known from the images of Katenos in his tomb in Ezbet Bashendi.<sup>58</sup> He holds two branches in his right hand, as on the east wall, while his left hand is raised against his chest, holding a yellow *ankh*-sign. There are faint traces of a pectoral on his chest. Behind him stands a lion-headed guardian, Aa-pehty (Greek: Apathes), wearing a short kilt, a green board collar and a crown of two ostrich feathers with a solar disc upon his head. This type of crown normally has ram's horns underneath, but this feature has been omitted here. He raises his right hand with a black long knife while the other is hanging down with another knife in horizontal position.<sup>59</sup> In front of the deceased, a brazier with a tall stand is flanked by two open lotus flowers with buds on either side and a vessel of incense with a blue coloured flame on top.

<sup>1</sup> *h3.k wsîr P3-di-wpw3t 2 s3 P3y-stb ms n t3-šr.t 3 p3y-ʿrʿr ʿnh b3.k n imntt 4 dt*

<sup>5</sup> *Skr-Wsîr Wsîr-Skr 6 w3h.k mw hr n t3*

<sup>7</sup> *dd mdw in ʿ3 phty shr [sbî] 8 nb imntt ir.n.f dî ʿnh mî Rʿ [dt nhb]*

<sup>54</sup> BAGNALL, VITTMANN, CRIBIORE 2015, pp. 341–343.

<sup>55</sup> See LÜDDECKENS et al. 2000, p. 1110.

<sup>56</sup> On the garment of Isis: GOLDMAN 1996.

<sup>57</sup> See BIANCHI 1988, p. 234; *Dendara* VIII, pl. DCCXLIV, DCCXLIX, DCCXC.

<sup>58</sup> OSING 1982, pl. 15a, 17a-b, 18.

<sup>59</sup> For a close parallel see VENIT 2016, fig. 4.33.

<sup>1</sup> Hail to you, Padiwepwaut <sup>2</sup> son of Pisechthis, who is born from Tashert<sup>3</sup>-payerer, may your *ba* live in the west <sup>4</sup> forever.

<sup>5</sup> Sokar-Osiris, Osiris-Sokar, <sup>6</sup> may you pour water on the earth.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Words spoken by Great-of-strength, who overthrows [the enemy], <sup>8</sup> lord of the West, as he made giving life like Re [forever and eternally].<sup>61</sup>

## 2. Osiris

Across the brazier and facing Padiwepwaut, Osiris is shown standing on a Maat sign in green. He is wrapped in a tight-fitting red garment and wears a bright green Atef crown with two white feathers. From the neck of the god appears a small falcon head facing left, suspended from a cord in the manner of a counterweight. This rare element is symbolic of the god's rejuvenation as Horus.<sup>62</sup> His two arms emerge to hold the crook and the flail on either side of the *was*-staff. Two accompanying columns read:

<sup>1</sup> *dd mdw in Wsir hnty-2imntt ntr 3 ntr 3 hks dt n smyt*

<sup>1</sup> Words spoken by Osiris, the Foremost <sup>2</sup> of the West, the great god, ruler of eternity in the Necropolis.

## 3. Anubis

At his back, Anubis is depicted with black skin, wearing a white vest and a short red and yellow kilt with a red ceremonial tail, a broad green collar and a yellow tripartite wig. His left hand appears to hold the back of Osiris while his right is upraised in a gesture of adoration. Two columns read:

<sup>1</sup> *dd mdw in Inpw s3 Wsir 2 ntr 3 nb Imntt*

<sup>1</sup> Words spoken by Anubis, son of Osiris, <sup>2</sup> the great god, lord of the West.

## 4. Isis

Behind Anubis, Isis is shown wearing a long yellow garment that exposes her breast and a green broad collar around her neck. Her body is painted in pink and her head is crowned with the sign for her name in yellow. Her right hand hangs down beside her body, grasping the *ankh*-sign while her left hand is upraised in a gesture of adoration. Three accompanying columns of texts read:

<sup>1</sup> *dd mdw in 3st wrt mwt-ntr 2 nbt smyt Mit ir.[3]s di 'nh mi R' dt nhb*

<sup>1</sup> Words spoken by Isis, the great one, the god's mother, <sup>2</sup> lady of the Necropolis of Mut,<sup>63</sup> as she made, <sup>3</sup> giving life as Re forever and eternally.

<sup>60</sup> The closest parallels and the last remaining signs enable the reconstruction of this text as *w3h.k mw hr t3 n ddu [t3-wr]*, see the upper bandeau inscription on the east wall or *w3h.k mw hr htpw 3bdw Ddu*, see the texts of the two entrances' thickness.

<sup>61</sup> For this completion see the columns of Isis, Nephthys and Horus on the same wall.

<sup>62</sup> Compare the image of Osiris with a falcon head emerging from his neck in: HUGONOT 1984, p. 92, fig. 6.

<sup>63</sup> For Mit as the ancient name of Mut, see KAPER 1997, p. 60.



### 5. Nephthys

Behind Isis, her sister Nephthys is shown wearing a long yellow garment that exposes her breast and a red broad collar around her neck. Her body is painted in green and her head is crowned with the hieroglyph representing her name in red and yellow, her right hand hangs down beside her body, grasping the *ankh*-sign while her left hand is raised in a gesture of adoration. Three accompanying columns of texts come as:

<sup>1</sup> *dd mdw in Nbt-hwt snt-ntr* <sup>2</sup> *hryt-ib imntt nbt Mit ir.s* <sup>3</sup> *di 'nh mī R' d[t] nh*

<sup>1</sup> Words spoken by Nephthys, god's sister, <sup>2</sup> who resides in the West, lady of Mut, as she made <sup>3</sup> giving life as Re [forev]er and eternally.

### 6. Horus

Behind Nephthys, Horus is shown hawk-headed, wearing a green vest and a short kilt with a ceremonial tail painted in yellow and red, a broad collar in green, a tripartite wig in red and the double crown in green and pink on his head. He holds the *was*-sceptre in his left hand while his right hangs down beside his body, grasping the *ankh*-sign, which is partly damaged. Three accompanying columns of texts come as:

<sup>1</sup> *dd mdw in Hr [s 3st]* <sup>2</sup> *s Wsir ntr '3 nb Mit* <sup>3</sup> *[ir.n] di 'nh mī R' dt nh*

<sup>1</sup> Words spoken by Horus, [son of Isis] <sup>2</sup> son of Osiris, the great god, lord of Mut, <sup>3</sup> as (he) [made] giving life as Re forever and eternally.

Photo: Mahmoud Ibrahim



FIG. 31. The western wall of the burial chamber, left half.

Photo: Mahmoud Ibrahim



FIG. 32. The western wall of the burial chamber, right half.



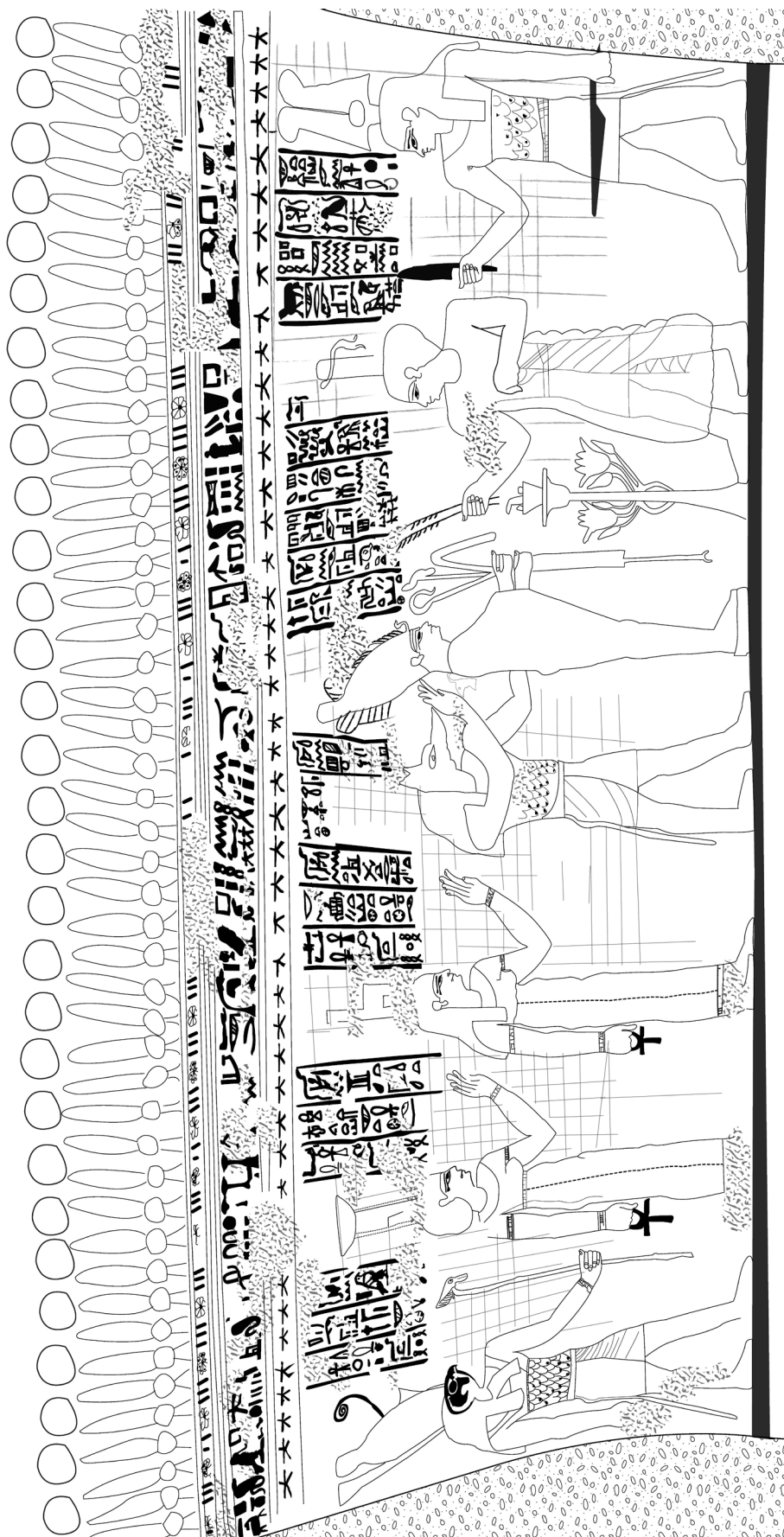


FIG. 33. Drawing of the western wall of the burial chamber.



● The south wall

[FIGS. 34–35]

Two symmetrical scenes decorate both halves of the south wall. Both depict the deceased standing barefoot, wearing a short kilt under a long, richly decorated fringed garment, with a yellow belt and a broad collar around his neck in green. Behind him stands an offering table with water and three loaves of bread. Both hands are raised in the attitude of adoration in front of Sokar-Osiris (left) and Osiris (right), who are seated in mummiform iconography, wearing the Atef crown and the divine beard. Both gods hold the crook and the flail. The rectangular base that supports their thrones is decorated with six groups of *nb-dd-ws*-signs upon *nb*-signs. Underneath is a reed mat depicted with rows of vertical and horizontal strokes. Behind the two deities, back-to-back, Nephthys (left) and Isis (right) are depicted standing and wearing a wide collar and a long, tight, yellow wraparound dress. They raise one of their hands in a gesture of adoration while the other hangs down beside their body.

The left side

Title:

<sup>1</sup> *dw3 n hm.k sk3 šfyt.k [.k]*

<sup>2</sup> *dī.n.[i] n.[k] irt-Hr r hbsw(?) .k ntr wr nfr r hbs h'w[.k]*

<sup>1</sup> adoration of Your Majesty, raising respect for you,

<sup>2</sup> [I] have given to [you] the eye of Horus for your clothes, O god, the great one, the beautiful one to clothe [your] limbs<sup>a</sup>.

The deceased:

<sup>1</sup> [...] *skr ntr 3 [...]*<sup>2</sup> [...] *hk3 dt hnty-imntt [...]*<sup>3</sup> *t3-ih3 ddu t3-wrt [...]*

<sup>1</sup> [...] Sokar, the great god, [...] <sup>2</sup> [...] ruler of eternity, the Foremost of the West, [...],<sup>3</sup> the Land of the cow, Busiris and Abydos<sup>b</sup>.

Sokar-Osiris:

<sup>1</sup> [*dd mdw in skr-Wsr hnty-imntt* <sup>2</sup> *nb t3wy ddu hryt-ib Mit*

<sup>1</sup> [words spoken by] Sokar-Osiris, the Foremost of the West,<sup>2</sup> lord of the two lands and Busiris, who resides in Mut.

Nephthys:

<sup>1</sup> [*dd mdw in Nbt-hwt snt-ntr hryt-ib*] *imntt* <sup>2</sup> *n Mit ii.s [n.]k dī [...]* *mī [...]*

<sup>1</sup> [words spoken by Nephthys, the god's sister, who resides] in the west<sup>2</sup> of Mut, she comes [to] you, she gives [...] like [...].

Text commentary

A part of this text existed in the tomb of Qtjnnws/Katenos in Ezbet Bashendi. Due to the predominantly damaged inscription Jürgen Osing faced some problems in his translation. His reading comes as “*Ich habe dir gegeben das Empfangen von Opferbroten, [um?] dein(en) [zu ?...] und Kleidung, um deinen Leib zu bekleiden.*”<sup>64</sup>

<sup>64</sup> OSING 1982, p. 63, pl. 65, no. 9.

- a. Oasis of el-Farafra, situated about 120 kilometres south of Bahariya Oasis.<sup>65</sup>
- b. The reading of the remaining hieroglyphs certainly refer to Abydos, according to Henri Gauthier.<sup>66</sup>

#### The right side

##### Title:

<sup>1</sup> *dw n hm.k skz šfyt.k hntt [.k]* <sup>2</sup> *dī.n.[i] n.[k] irt-Hr r hbsw.k(?) ntr wr nfr r hbs h'wt [.k]*

<sup>1</sup> Adoration to Your Majesty, raising respect for you in front of [you]. <sup>2</sup> [I] have given [you] the eye of Horus for your clothes, O god, the great one, the beautiful one to clothe [your] limbs.

##### The deceased:

<sup>1</sup> [...] *hnty-īmntt* <sup>2</sup> *[ntr 'z] hḳz dt Wnn-nfr m'z-[hrw n] t 3-ihṯ Ddw [T3-wrt] 'nh ntr* <sup>4</sup> *n idbw nb st-bz [...]* *itrt hrt n ...?*

<sup>1</sup> [...], the Foremost of the West, <sup>2</sup> [the great god], ruler of the eternity, Wenn-nefer, justified [in] the Land of <sup>3</sup> the cow, Busiris and [Abydos], may the god live <sup>4</sup> in the banks (Egypt), lord of the Place of the ba [...] in the Double Sanctuary in ..?

##### Osiris:

<sup>1</sup> [*dd mdw in Wsir*] *nb T3wy Ddw* <sup>2</sup> [...] *Wnn-nfr* *hnty-īmntt*

<sup>1</sup> [words spoken by Osiris], lord of the Two Lands and Busiris, <sup>2</sup> [...] Wenn-nefer] the Foremost of the West.

##### Isis:

<sup>1</sup> *dd mdw in 3st wrt mwt-ntr hryt-ib T3wy* <sup>2</sup> *Ddw [...]*.

<sup>1</sup> words spoken by Isis, the great one, the god's mother in the middle of the Two Lands <sup>2</sup> and Busiris [...].

#### Two columns behind Isis

<sup>1</sup> *hy.k P3-di-wp-w3wt sz n P3y-sth ms n T3-šrt.t-p3y-'r' r ii.wy n.k Inpw imy-wt nb t3-dsrt dī.f 'wy r.k n krt 3t nfrt mnht [n dt]* <sup>2</sup> *hr imntt n Mit ii.wy n[k] 3st wrt 'wy.s n.k n krt nfrt mnht 'nh b3.k m pt hr R' mn rn.k m t3 hr Gb [ht.k m dw3t dt]*

<sup>1</sup> Hail to you Padiwepwaut son of Pisechthis, who is born from Tashert-pay-erer, welcome to you!, it is Anubis who is in the place of embalming, lord of the sacred land, he gives his hands to you in the great, beautiful and excellent tomb [for eternity]<sup>67</sup> <sup>2</sup> in the West of Mut, welcome to [you]! It is Isis who comes to [you], the great one, her two hands to you in the beautiful and excellent tomb, may your *ba* live in the sky with Re and may your name remain<sup>68</sup> on earth with Geb, [may your corpse be in the Underworld forever].<sup>69</sup>

<sup>65</sup> GAUTHIER 1925–1931, VI, p. 4.

<sup>66</sup> GAUTHIER 1925–1931, III, p. 52.

<sup>67</sup> For a close parallel see OSING 1982, p. 69, pl. 68, no. f. It is also partly inscribed on the south wall of the antechamber in Tomb 2: BASHENDI 2013, p. 57, fig. 18 (see the south wall of the west funerary chamber, p. 65, fig. 27).

<sup>68</sup> The right jamb of the entrance of Tomb 6 replaces this word with *mp* “to be rejuvenated”.

<sup>69</sup> For a very close parallel see OSING 1982, p. 68, pl. 67, no. f. the completion existed in the right jamb of the entrance of Tomb 6.





Photo: Mahmoud Ibrahim

Fig. 34. The southern wall of the burial chamber.



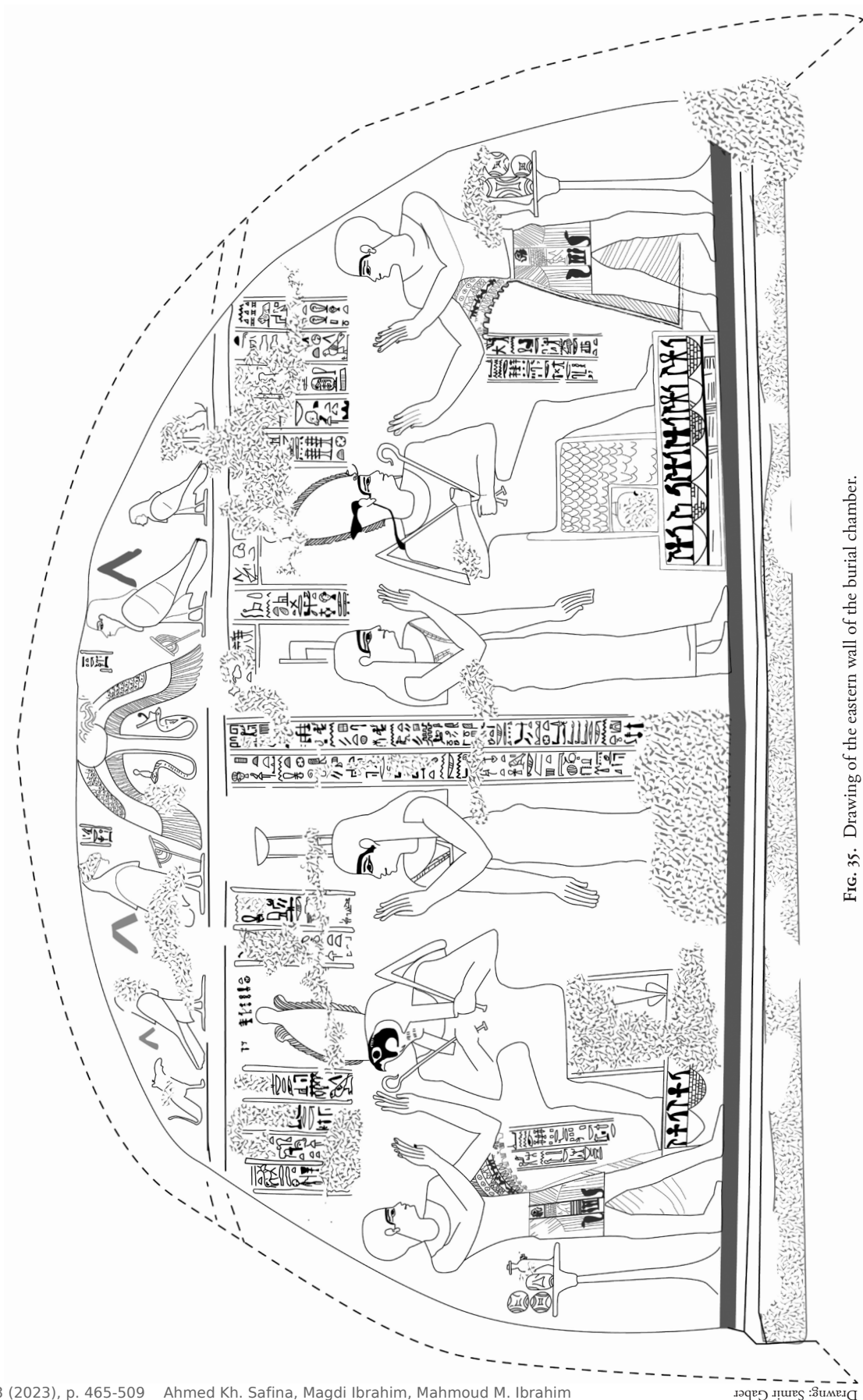


FIG. 35. Drawing of the eastern wall of the burial chamber.

*Ceiling and upper frieze decorations*

[FIGS. 27, 46]

The decorative program of the vaulted ceiling begins immediately above the upper bandeau inscription on the north wall. The painted ceiling's scenes are meticulously executed to provide the necessary components of the solar journey during the night that reflects the eternal rebirth and renewal of the tomb owner.<sup>70</sup> In the centre of the upper zone of the north wall, just above the door, Hor-Akhty is represented as a falcon within a red sun disk placed upon a yellow horizon symbol with sun rays streaming down below. Two *djed*-pillars flank it on each side. Behind the *djed*-pillars are four *ba*-birds, two on each side, with long-wigged baboon heads facing the horizon and raising their hands in adoration. In the iconography, the baboon refers to the moment of sunrise. They are known as the '*bas* of the East'. Behind them, on each side, is a depiction of two small serpents standing on their own tail. Two short accompanying columns read: *pt.k imntt m pt R'* "your western sky is as the sky of Re" (on the right side); *b3w.k i3btt [m] pt R'* "your *bas* of the east are [in] the sky of Re" (on the left side).

The ceiling's surface is covered with stars in dark blue on a yellow background. It is divided and flanked by three rows of alternating coloured sun discs. The central row that runs from the entrance along the vaulted ceiling towards the centre of the south wall is coloured alternately in red and yellow, while the rows of discs immediately above the Kheker friezes on both sides of the vault are coloured alternately in red and black.

The upper lunette of the south wall has a scene of a winged sun disc with two pendent uraei embodying the two goddesses Nekhbet and Wadjet. They are crowned with the crowns of Upper and Lower Egypt respectively. On the two sides are four *ba*-birds with human heads wearing a long wig and the initial two have the hieroglyph for wind or breath at their feet.<sup>71</sup> Behind them, on the outer edges, are two crouching black jackals, which symbolize the '*bas* of the West', belonging to the setting sun. Two short accompanying columns are identical to those on the northern wall: *pt.k imntt m pt R'*, "your western sky is as the sky of Re" (on the right side); *b3w.k i3btt m pt R'*, "your *bas* of the east are in the sky of Re" (on the left side).

The lower zone of the ceiling to the east and the west sides consists of two main elements separating the decorations of the vaulted ceiling from the upper bandeau inscriptions: a row of green Kheker signs with red discs and an ornamented block band including floral shapes, each separated by three short vertical strokes.

*The upper bandeau inscription*

[FIGS. 27–29, 31–32]

The lowest part of the vaulted ceiling, below the block band, bears the inscription of the upper frieze, bordered by two red lines at the top and bottom. The starting point of the upper bandeau inscription is formed by the *ankh*-sign in the middle of the north wall, above the doorway, from which it runs to the left and the right. The bandeau in essence reflects the Osirian liturgy, which starts on the east wall and continues on the west wall.

<sup>70</sup> OSING 1982, pl. 26.

<sup>71</sup> Compare OSING 1982, pl. 23c.

- The north wall, right half (1) and left half (2)

1. *‘nh b3 n Wsir Wnn-nfr ntr 3 nb smyt n Mit h33 dt hnty imntt hry-ib 3bdw r ‘nh b3 n P3-di-w3wt dt*

May he live the *ba* of Osiris, Wenn-nefer, the great god, Lord of the Necropolis of Mut, ruler of eternity, the Foremost of the West, who resides in Abydos, in order that the *ba* of Padiwepwaut lives forever.

2. *‘nh b3 wsir P3-di-w3wt ms n T3-šr.t-p3y-‘r r n(?) m3 R dt nh3*


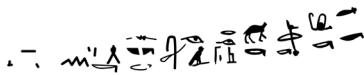

May the soul of Osiris Padiwepwaut who is born from Tasherterer live like Re forever and eternally.

- The east wall

1 *[hy P3-di]-w3wt [s3 P3y-s]th ms n T3-šr.t-p3y-‘r r m3-‘hrw 3.k phty.k wsr.k hn.k r Wsir ir b3.k s3m Skr w3h.k mw hr htp n Ddw [T3-wr] [k].k r hrt hn ntrw s3m Skr Wsir hrt hrw rnp3.k [h]nw*  
[Hail Pade]wepwat [son of Pise]ch this, who is born from Tasherterer, justified, may you be great, may you be mighty and strong, may you approach Osiris<sup>a</sup>, may your *ba* guide Sokar, may you pour water on the altar of Busiris [and Abydos]<sup>b</sup>, may you en[ter] into heaven with the gods who guide Sokar-Osiris every day<sup>c</sup>. May you be rejuvenated [a]mong.

#### Text commentary

a. *3.k phty.k wsr.k hn.k r Wsir ir b3.k s3m Skr*, the parallel sources for this line are:

Tomb of Qtijnws/Katenos in Ezbet Bashendi, Texts A, B		Osing 1982, pl. 66.
Tomb of Petubastis in el-Muzawwaqa		Osing 1982, pl. 70.
Tomb of Petosiris in el-Muzawwaqa		Osing 1982, pl. 71.



- b. *w3h.k mw hr t3 n Ddw [T3-wr]*, the parallel source for this line is found in the tomb of Qtijnws/Katenos in Ezbet Bashendi, Text A:<sup>72</sup>



● The west wall

2 *b3[w ntry 3r b3.k] sns m-hnw h3 mni h3t [m]-hnw h3 mni m h3t [m-hnw] wsht m3't ts.w n.k*  
*m3h m-hnw hwt-d3w [sm].k r m33 hrt n snt hn' ntrw w3h pr.k b3 hr h3t '[k].k r n3mt n 3ht sw*  
 24 *s3m Skr-Ws3r sw 25 pr b3.k [m]-hnw [R-St3w]*

[among] [the divine] *ba[s]*, [may your *ba*] breathe [a]mong the millions of forerunners in the Hall of the Righteous, may [they] tie on for you the fillet<sup>a</sup> within the Mansion of Provisions, may you [go] to see heaven on the sixth day with the gods, may your tomb endure and [your] *ba* being on the corpse, may you en[ter] the Neshmet-bark on the 24th day, may Sokar-Osiris guide [you] on the 25th [day], may your *ba* go forth from [Ro-Setau]<sup>b</sup>.

Text commentary

- a. *'k r n3mt n 3ht sw 24*, the parallel source for this line is found in the tomb of Qtijnws/Katenos in Ezbet Bashendi, Text A:<sup>73</sup>



- b. *s3m Skr-Ws3r sw 25 pr b3.k [m]-hnw [r-st3w]*, the parallel source for this line is found in the tomb of Qtijnws/Katenos in Ezbet Bashendi, Text A:<sup>74</sup>



<sup>72</sup> OSING 1982, pl. 66A.

<sup>73</sup> OSING 1982, pl. 66A.

<sup>74</sup> OSING 1982, pl. 66A.

### 3. THE FESTIVALS OF SOKAR AND OSIRIS IN THE MONTH OF KHOIAK IN DAKHLA OASIS

Jürgen Osing was the first to translate and study this kind of text<sup>75</sup> when he published the tomb of Qtjnnws/Katenos in Ezbet Bashendi as well as the tombs of Muzawwaqa in 1982.<sup>76</sup> Additional scattered texts and scenes were published subsequently and ought to be taken as references to this same festival attested in different tombs dating back to the Roman period in Dakhla Oasis.<sup>77</sup> The various mythological hints relate to the different ceremonies of the death, burial and successful resurrection of Osiris by erecting the *djed*-pillar on the final day, Khoiak 30.<sup>78</sup> Hence the deceased was identified with Osiris in his resurrection and victory over death.

#### Scenes and texts attesting Osiris' Khoiak festivals in Roman tombs in Dakhla Oasis

##### *Tomb 1 in Bir el-Shaghala*

1. A *djed*-pillar on the second register of the south wall is depicted on a stand with a cloth strip like a *tyt*-sign on each side. Isis and Nephthys are represented by two *tyt*-signs flanking the *djed*-pillar. Emerging from the pillar is Osiris' head with a double feathered crown, two cobras and ram horns. On the right side a *heqa*-sceptre and a flagellum accompany him.
2. The Abydos fetish appears with two feathers, on the same wall and register, with two cobras and a solar disc. A *ba*-bird on a standard with a beard flanks the niche on the left side. Above the niche is a falcon facing right with extended wings. Under the niche is an emblematic group of Kheker signs containing an *udjat*-eye in the middle.<sup>79</sup>
3. Wepwawet is shown as a standing jackal on a standard carried by a *was*-sign with arms in the third register of the north wall.
4. The image of an ibis standing on a shrine in the second register of the north wall is noteworthy as well.<sup>80</sup>
5. The veneration of the Abydos fetish in the frieze of the *ba*-birds is also a relevant feature.

##### *Tomb 2 in Bir el-Shaghala*

1. Four priests in procession in the east panel of the south wall of the antechamber, wearing sandals and long kilts with belts, carry the Abydos fetish that is set on a platform with carrying poles. The upper part of the fetish is decorated with dotted bands and crowned

<sup>75</sup> The first eastern Osiris chapel on the roof of the Dendara temple describes this festival in great detail: CHASSINAT 1966, 1968; *Dendara X*, pp. 26–50, pl. 3–5, 25–30; for a detailed study and analysis of the feast see DAVID 1981, pp. 124–125; MIKHAIL 1984, pp. 25–44; MIKHAIL 1983, pp. 51–53; CAUVILLE 1997, pp. 17–19, 220–224; EATON 2006, pp. 75–101; DAVID 2016, pp. 264–265.

<sup>76</sup> OSING 1982, pp. 63–66.

<sup>77</sup> See the south and north walls of Tomb 1 in Bir el-Shaghala (ASHOUR et al. 2020, figs. 48–49); some funeral objects discovered in Ismant el-Kharab (KAPER 2014, p. 360); the tombs of Petosiris and Petubastis at el-Muzawwaqa (OSING 1982, pp. 80–81, 92–94, pl. 70–71).

<sup>78</sup> CHASSINAT 1966, p. 756; DAVID 1981, p. 123–124.

<sup>79</sup> ASHOUR et al. 2020, pp. 26–27, figs. 28–29.

<sup>80</sup> ASHOUR et al. 2020, p. 31, fig. 37.

by a sun disk and two high feathers with two protective serpents in both sides. Two ram standards and the souls of Nekhen as falcons and souls of Pe as jackals flank the fetish on both sides. Isis is shown with extended wings to protect the fetish already in Nineteenth Dynasty sources at Abydos.<sup>81</sup> In the upper part, two falcons crowned by a solar disk flank the fetish; each of them holds a *hw*-fan. In the lower part of the fetish is a base decorated with two images of the king raising the sky like Shu.<sup>82</sup>

2. An emblematic group of *djed*-pillars and *tyt*-signs in the western panel of the south wall of the antechamber forms the upper part of the scene of the Osiris fetish. Below is the fetish, and Nephthys and Isis are shown standing in long, wraparound dresses with outspread wings to protect the fetish.<sup>83</sup>

### *Petubastis and Petosiris tombs at Qaret el-Muzawwaga*

1. On the north wall of the tomb of Petubastis, first register, Anubis erects the mummy and the deceased raises his two hands in adoration in front of the Abydos fetish, which is flanked by two ram standards.
2. In the tomb of Petosiris, a crescent-shaped *henu*-barque of Sokar is shown. It includes the cabin and an image of a falcon's head attached to two poles. Under the falcon head are four canopic jars with four sons of Horus headed stoppers. At the stern there are four steering oars. The prow is decorated with a horned gazelle and a bull's head with a rope hanging down from its mouth.<sup>84</sup>

### *The tomb of Qtjnnw/Katenos in Ezbet Bashendi focus*

1. The fetish of Abydos, on the west wall, is erected between two ram standards and adorned by a double figure of Katenos.<sup>85</sup>
2. A destroyed scene shows Osiris wrapped in a tight-fitting garment, the lower part of which is still preserved, and flanked by four sons of Horus, two on each side.<sup>86</sup>
3. Three priests appear in procession, on the south wall, wearing long kilts with belts and holding standards.<sup>87</sup>

Most texts cast light on the 24th, 25th and 26th days of the Osirian Khoiak Festival. These days were marked by great ritual activities. The 24th day is defined by the Calendar of Medinet Habu as “The Day of placing Sokar in their Midst”. This definition refers to an interment of the mummified body of Sokar-Osiris. Additional details are recorded in the Akhmenu (Karnak) about the ceremonies of this day, which included a series of rituals such as the presentation of offerings, the act of censuring, the performing of a libation and the slaying of enemies. In the night of the 24th day, the ferrying of Osiris in the Neshmet-bark was acted out, carrying the mummified body to its permanent resting place in Peqer. According to the

<sup>81</sup> For parallels see EATON 2006, p. 86, fig. 6.

<sup>82</sup> BASHENDI 2013, p. 58, fig. 18.

<sup>83</sup> BASHENDI 2013, p. 63, fig. 19.

<sup>84</sup> OSING 1982, pl. 29b.

<sup>85</sup> OSING 1982, pl. 15a.

<sup>86</sup> OSING 1982, pl. 15; for parallels see EATON 2006, p. 83, fig. 4.

<sup>87</sup> OSING 1982, pl. 18b.



inscriptions of the Osirian Khoiak at Dendara, the ferrying was commemorated on the 22nd day by 34 boats on the sacred lake, while the new wrapped images of Sokar were formed on the 23rd. The 24th day at Dendara was devoted to rewrapping the old moulds and figures of Sokar in preparation for their concealment on the 30th. The 25th day is known as the *Ntryt*-feast during which the restoration of the divine powers to the mummified and buried Sokar-Osiris was performed. On that day, morning ceremonies took place with participants wearing onion garlands around their necks. The night of the 25th day witnessed a series of activities—with a focus on onion garlands and purification rites with rejuvenating water and incense. The aim behind these rituals, which continued to the dawn of the 26th day, was the regeneration and revitalisation of the god; they allowed him to pass from death to a renewal of life and power through union with the sun disc the next morning. The major event of the 26th day was a festival and procession (*stj*) in which Sokar went around the walls. The various ceremonies of this day were intended to ensure the triumph of the god over the forces of darkness, Apophis and chaotic forces in the great battle at Nedyt.<sup>88</sup> The decoration of the Dakhla tombs of the Roman Period shows that these ideas and ceremonies, which have a long history in the Nile Valley, were also central to beliefs and practices in the oasis.

The approximate dating of this tomb is the Roman period, maybe the Trajanic period, based on the appearance of Hathor with a female lady body and a cow's head holding a large key in her right hand on the entrance wall to the left hand.<sup>89</sup> The glass vessel found in the vaulted antechamber, dating from the second half of the first century, is further evidence of this date.

The SCA forthcoming project is to reveal the northern and eastern areas which are dominated by large mud brick buildings in order to trace and record all the architecture accessible in the necropolis.

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