

Goddesses in Ramessid Egypt:  
Representations of Gender and Gendered  
Agency in the Divine Sphere



I. Text

Edward Scrivens  
The Queen's College  
University of Oxford

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Photo by author

*'God may be in the details, but the goddess is in the questions.'*

-Gloria Steinem (1994, 270)

To Hathor of Dendera. A deal's a deal.

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## Abstract

The gendered representation of goddesses has received little explicit analysis within Egyptology. Studies of goddesses have tended to focus on materials associated with particular deities, and scholarly conversations surrounding gender have largely concerned the experiences of living people. However, the divine sphere is a very ‘real’ aspect of a culture’s social world; to only theorise gender processes among humans is to overlook an entire realm in which those processes might also be active. This thesis interrogates the gendered agency of goddesses in the Ramessid period, as materialised in their two-dimensional representations.

Analysis centres on the wall scenes of Theban and Memphite private tombs, and of three contemporaneous temple environments: the Small Temple of Abu Simbel, the temple of Seti I at Abydos, and the Great Hypostyle Hall at Karnak. Supporting examples are drawn from votive stelae. These sources were selected for their potential to visualise structures of gendered agency and status, and the opportunity they provide to observe those processes across regions and ritual contexts. A typology was created of the roles fulfilled by goddesses in such compositions, which together with methods of statistical description revealed patterns of agency both within monuments and across data sets. These patterns were then explored through the use of case studies.

The depiction of goddesses’ gendered agency is shown to vary according to the ritual function and focus of a space, with regional artistic preferences also playing a role. While goddesses can be prominent in certain contexts, they are frequently allocated secondary positions in hierarchies of status; the organisation of compositions, even of entire decorative programmes, can serve to reconcile female prominence with male primacy. However, it is also shown that this secondary position allows goddesses the space to exercise unique modes of agency and exhibit their own forms of representation.

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## Abbreviations

- BD Book of the Dead, cited by spell number.
- BM British Museum.
- CT Coffin Texts, cited by spell number.
- CT de Buck, A. and Allen, J. P. 1935–2006. *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* (8 vols.: de Buck 1–7, Allen 8). The University of Chicago Oriental Institute Publications 34, 49, 64, 67, 73, 81, 87, 132. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- DK Desroches-Noblecourt, C. and Kuentz, C. 1968. *Le petit temple d'Abou Simbel: Nofretari pour qui se lève le dieu-soleil* (2 vols.). Mémoires 1. Cairo: Centre de documentation et d'étude sur l'ancienne Égypte.
- KRI Kitchen, K. A. 1975–1991. *Ramesside Inscriptions, Historical and Biographical* (8 vols.). Oxford: Blackwell.
- MMA Metropolitan Museum of Art.
- PM Porter, B. and Moss, R. L. B. 1960– [1927–]. *Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Reliefs, and Paintings* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 8 vols. ongoing). Oxford: Griffith Institute.
- PT Pyramid Texts, cited by spell number.
- PT Sethe, K. 1908–22. *Die altägyptischen Pyramidtexte* (4 vols.). Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs.
- TLA *Thesaurus Linguae Aegyptiae* (<http://aew.bbaw.de/tla/index.html>).
- TT Theban Tomb.
- Urk. Sethe, K., et al.. 1904–1961. *Urkunden des aegyptischen Altertums* (8 vols.). Leipzig and Berlin: J. C. Hinrichs and Akademie-Verlag.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background of the Project

*The Onomasticon of Amenemope*, whose earliest and most complete manuscript (P. Golénischeff) has been dated to the tenure of the high priest of Amun Pinedjem I (Bennett 2015, 6–8), is a list comprising various elements of the ancient Egyptian world, from divinities to countries to cuts of meat. The section outlining the higher orders of being begins with *ntr*/god, followed by *ntrt*/goddess, *ꜥh*/male transfigured spirit, *ꜥht*/female transfigured spirit, and *nswt*/king (Gardiner 1947, pl. 7 l. 12–3). The form and ordering of these terms produce several effects. Firstly, the designations appear to communicate a binary gender model, an impression that aligns with the wider milieu of Egyptian textual and visual representation (discussed further in §1.3). Secondly, the way that the terms are formed through Egyptian grammatical gendering— masculine root words with feminine variants— is suggestive of androcentrism, that Egyptian culture treated maleness as a default state of which femaleness was a deviation or addendum. Finally, the patterning of these terms places the male categorizations before female ones, suggesting that the gender model in operation is not only binary, but hierarchical; deities are ranked above transfigured spirits, but gods are ranked above goddesses.

The initial impressions created by the *Onomasticon* might prompt the reader to seek out further literature on Egyptological literature on gender processes in the divine sphere, yet few if any such studies exist. Valuable works have been produced examining material that pertain to specific goddesses, such as Geraldine Pinch’s work on the votive offerings to Hathor (1994), or Dominique Valbelle’s diachronic study of Satet and Anuket (1981). However, little work has been done on goddesses as a category of being, and how

they might experience and participate in the processes that, according to anthropologist Marilyn Strathern, characterise gender as a relational system of sociality (Strathern 2014, 4–5).

Egyptologists have written on gender or gendered experience more broadly, yet these studies tend to focus on the enacted lives of ‘real’ people, or visual and textual representations thereof (e.g. Toivari-Viitala 2001, Stefanović 2016). Scholars such as Deborah Sweeney (e.g. 2002, 2015), Gay Robins (e.g. 1994, 2008), Terry Wilfong (e.g. 1997, 2002), Christopher Eyre (e.g. 1998, 2013), and Richard Parkinson (e.g. 1995, 2008) have done much to advance conversations surrounding gender, including the expansion of the scope of those conversations to include men and masculinity. Nevertheless, few of these contributions foreground the divine world and goddesses as the primary focus of analysis (a notable exception being Sweeney, discussed in §1.3). Some investigations of gender do reach beyond the earthly realm, including Kathlyn Cooney’s and Heather Lee McCarthy’s examinations of the mechanics of female rebirth in New Kingdom sources (Cooney 2008; McCarthy 2002), yet these too ultimately concern once-living people.

To exclude or omit the divine sphere from processual discussions of gender is more than just an oversight. It leaves a whole dimension of the Egyptian social world unproblematised, perhaps one of the most important aspects of that social world to the Egyptians themselves. Ideas of how gender functions among deities is an equally ‘real’ aspect of gender processes as the roles and identities ascribed to humans, since the full reality experienced by a culture and the individuals within it is not limited to the material world; it includes ideas, beliefs, and imaginings. As stated by sociologist Robert Bellah, human beings ‘operate all the time in a series of non-ordinary realities as well as ordinary reality’ (2011, 1), with even the parameters of the latter being culturally constructed. Deities are therefore equally as viable for gender analysis as humans. Indeed, to arrive at a

fuller understanding of Egyptian gender constructs and processes, the inclusion of divinities is vital. To quote Christiane Zivie-Coche:

‘The gods existed. Every study in the history of religions entails this premise. Contrary to a theologian or a philosopher, we do not need to wonder whether gods, either those of others or our own, exist and how to prove it. Though they did not belong to the real world, for the historian, they themselves have no less reality than any other classic historical phenomenon: war, political succession, famine, and so forth. They existed because they constituted the skeleton of the imaginary realm of the Egyptians, the perceptible signs of the invisible realm that the Egyptians created’ (in Dunand and Zivie-Coche 2004, 5).

The scarcity of analysis regarding gender dynamics in the divine sphere is therefore a significant gap in scholarship. This study seeks to begin addressing that gap.

## 1.2. Focus and Aims

The following chapters address the research question of how gendered roles and agencies are constructed for goddesses in two-dimensional compositions of the Ramessid period (c. 1295-1069 BCE: Shaw 2000, 481; see below), primarily using the wall decoration of private tombs and temples, but occasionally drawing on other sources. The choices behind the selection of material, and the theoretical and methodological frameworks that underlie its use, are discussed further in subsequent sections. What follows here is an outline and explanation of the focus of this thesis, as well as some hopes for what the study might contribute to Egyptology and to the wider study of gender.

The present focus on two-dimensional compositions derives from their potential to reveal underlying gender constructs, through the nature of visual representation as a medium and through the mechanics of Egyptian two-dimensional art. Art, to an extent, is the conceptual made visible. Whether paintings on tomb walls or sculptures erected in temples, visual media allows an idea to be materialised, to be given physical presence and dimensionality. Art also visualises cultural norms on a structural level, through its

adherence to convention. Such a principle is particularly applicable to the Egyptian context, in which the form and arrangement of compositions embody an underlying algebra of propriety and prioritisation that John Baines terms ‘decorum’ (e.g. 2007, 14–29). A figure’s position within a scene, whether that figure is obscured or prominent, their relationship to other figures, all have repercussions within calculations of decorum and so are likely to be intentional choices. Indeed, two-dimensional compositions that arrange figures sequentially— as deities are frequently depicted in the offering scenes of tombs and temples— perhaps necessitate such organisational choices, which may be guided by, and revealing of, underlying conceptions about the roles and status of the depicted figures. Two-dimensional compositions therefore give visual and spatial reality to conceptual dynamics, understandings of which might be distilled systematic analysis. The project might therefore be described as art historical in approach, yet anthropological in consequence. A crucial lens that is used to distil those understandings is the concept of agency, which is discussed in the forthcoming outline of theoretical frameworks (§1.3).

While visual representations are used as the main focus of analysis for examining the gendered roles and relationships of goddesses, it should be noted that the scenes of tombs and temples interact closely with the texts that surround them, and often incorporate texts into the compositions themselves. Textual material is therefore included in discussions where appropriate, such as in one of the case studies of Chapter 2, where a ritual text is translated in order to contextualise an unusual depiction of a goddess that interrelates with it (see §1.6 for overview of chapters).

Yet why focus on the Ramessid period specifically? The material of this period is a particularly rich source of data for studying the gendered agency of goddesses, since (to follow Strathern) dynamics of gendered agency are constructed through interactions and relationality, whether between figures in a single scene or how a scene interacts with the

rest of a decorative programme. In short, the more scenes depicting as wide a range of deities as possible, the better. Following the Amarna period, there was an increase in the number and range of deities appearing in the decorative programmes of private tombs, and in the areas of the tomb plan where they could be depicted (Assmann 2003, 49; discussed further in §1.4.1). The deities appearing in tombs of the early 18th Dynasty were drawn from a limited group (Osiris, Anubis, the sun god, and the Goddess of the West), and were spatially restricted to the lintels of doorways and the chapel walls (*ibid.*). After the Amarna period this repertoire of divinities expanded, though as noted by Nigel Strudwick, remained thematically circumscribed to those most relevant to the deceased's passage into the next world (1994, 327). Deities could also be depicted anywhere in the tomb plan. The increase in the number of depicted deities not only provides more goddess figures to analyse, but also introduces a more diverse range of relationships that those goddesses may be shown participating in.

Furthermore, the developments in decorative organisation that accompany, and in fact facilitate this increase in deities (see §1.4.1), adds a spatial dimension to the analyses possible within Ramessid tombs; in addition to examining a goddess' position and actions within her own scene, we can also consider her placement on a wall or in the wider monument, how her scene relates to others, and so on. These developments in tomb decoration, and the opportunities they present, underlie the study's chronological focus on the Ramessid period, as does the large-scale investment in temple building by the Ramessid kings (see §1.4.2), whose monuments include spaces or even entire temples dedicated to goddesses.

Yet before examining the study's chosen source materials in greater detail, it is appropriate to briefly note how this thesis understands the chronological parameters of the Ramessid period, which are not universally agreed upon by scholars. Egyptological

literature often equates the Ramessid period with the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Dynasties, beginning with the accession of Ramesses I and ending with the fragmentation of centralised political control under Ramesses XI (e.g. Shaw 2000, 481; Van de Mierop 2011, 213–5, 256–7). However, as noted by Jacobus van Dijk and Elizabeth Froid, the Ramessid kings themselves appear to have considered Horemheb of the late 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty as their dynasty's founder (van Dijk 2000, 294; Froid 2007, 12). Horemheb's status as a dynastic ancestor is indicated by various sources, such as a votive stela of the 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty scribe Ramose (JdE 72023: PM I:2<sup>2</sup>, 696–7), discovered at Deir el-Medina by Bernard Bruyère and now in the Cairo Museum. The lunette is inscribed with the images of three seated kings, these being Ramesses I, Horemheb, and Seti I, the dynastic ancestors of Ramesses II whose cartouches the donor worships in the lower section of the stela (Bruyère 1948–52, II, pl. 38.79). However, the developments in private tomb decoration that facilitate this study's analyses come to fruition during the 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, even if their origins lie in earlier periods (see §1.4.1). Therefore, for the purposes of the current project, the Ramessid period is herein defined as the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Dynasties, in line with standard chronological listings.

It is from the private tombs and temples of this period that the study's data sets were chosen and gathered. These sources presented themselves as the best candidates for the primary focus of analysis, on several grounds. Not only do these monuments typically contain numerous depictions of deities, but they are architectural spaces as well as carriers of scenes. Discussions of gendered representation in these monuments can therefore incorporate a spatial dimension, allowing representations of goddesses to be mapped onto these 'total works of art' (Baines 1997, 232), and their agencies considered against the functions of those spaces. Indeed, the function of tombs and temples is another factor in the study's focus on their decorative programmes.

While it will be shown that Ramessid tomb and temple environments share some architectural and decorative vocabularies (see §1.4.1), one might nonetheless draw a distinction in their functions. At their most fundamental level, temples exist as spaces for the worship of deities, sometimes including the king and royal family, and to construct and perpetuate an ideal world order (Hornung 1992, 116–25; Shafer 1997, 5–9). Meanwhile, the primary purpose of tomb decoration is to facilitate the owner’s rebirth into the next world, whilst also reintegrating them (or their idealised social self) into the society of the living through biographical representation and facilitation of the mortuary cult (Assmann 2003, 46–8; 2005, 12–4; Froid 2007, 1–4, 28–9). The worship of deities is a prominent subject matter for scenes in both contexts, yet such images ultimately serve the regenerative function of the tomb space, and do not form the core function of tomb spaces as they do in temples. The construction and maintenance of relationships with the divine through ritual interaction forms part of the core function of the temple, thus the scenes that materialise these interactions are, to some extent, ends in themselves. By examining the representation of goddesses and their roles in both tomb and temple contexts, one can compare patterns in spaces that serve different ritual purposes, and consider how the use of goddesses to achieve those purposes might reflect on how the Egyptians understood the gendered agency of female deities.

It is pertinent at this juncture to note why private tombs have been selected for use, rather than royal ones. The tombs of kings, queens, and princes have highly standardised decorative programmes. While of course there are variations, evolutions, and innovations in these just as in any other cultural media, the layout and decoration of Ramessid royal tombs adhered to consistent patterns. Kings’ tombs adhered to largely the same plan from the time of Ramesses II into the 20<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, with some abbreviated variations (Dodson and Ikram 2008, 255–7). The scenes within Ramessid kings’ tombs were largely taken

from a circumscribed set of underworld books, such as the *Amduat*, the *Book of Gates*, the *Book of Caverns*, and so on, while queens' tombs are primarily decorated with cultic scenes with some *Book of the Dead* vignettes, and princes' tombs centre the king as the conduit of the occupant's rebirth (ibid., 262–5; McCarthy 2008, 85–90). Private tombs also have recurring scenes and motifs, mostly taken from the *Book of the Dead* (see Dodson 2010, 820), yet there is variation in the selection, form, and combinations of such scenes. Private tombs also contain various examples of scenes that are not taken from underworld books, being highly unusual or even unique innovations, several of which are discussed over the course of this thesis. Furthermore, there is greater variation in the architectural layout of Ramessid private tombs than their royal contemporaries, therefore providing greater opportunity to observe patterns or symbolic relationships in the spatial positioning of goddesses' images. Therefore, while royal tombs are referenced at several points in the following analyses, it is private funerary decoration that joins temple scenes to form this study's primary source material.

However, while tombs and temples were deemed the most suitable candidates for the discussions of the following chapters, they were not the only contenders. Other media carry two-dimensional compositions—papyri, stelae, and so on—yet their bounded nature or frequent lack of archaeological context makes it difficult to integrate these into the forms of analysis utilised by this study, which rely heavily on the relationality of goddess images within space in order to assess their functions and agency (discussed in §1.5). However, such sources could nonetheless provide insights that might supplement or nuance analyses of goddesses' gendered representation. Therefore, the discussions of the thesis integrate examples from a subsidiary corpus of 11 stelae that depict goddesses, all of which were donated by the previously cited scribe Ramose (catalogue provided in appendices, cited hereafter as 'RCat'). The stelae were chosen as secondary material

because they were commissioned and dedicated by a single person. Their use might therefore preserve a sense of a monumental programme somewhat analogous to the study's primary sources. Furthermore, Ramose himself was a contemporary of, and even built monuments with, the vizier Paser (Donohue 1988, 109; Davies 1999, 79–80) whose tomb provides one of the cases studies in Chapter 2 (see §1.6). Finally, Ramose's stelae serve as a bridge between the two contexts of the primary sources. The objects are part of Ramose's own monumental programme, and therefore are within a similar monumental sphere to private tombs. At the same time, all the provenanced examples from the corpus of goddess-carrying stelae (RCat 1–5, 10) were discovered in, or in areas adjacent to, a temple or chapel. The votive stelae of Ramose are therefore well placed to serve as both complement and counterpoint to observations made in the primary material.

Through the focus on these sources and contexts, this thesis aims to assess the roles of goddesses and how the representation of these roles communicates and constructs goddesses' gendered agency. However, the project is not intended to be the final word to the questions it poses, but the beginning of a conversation. The author hopes not only to address a gap in scholarship, but to invite others to also address that gap, and in doing so to explore new methods and approaches. In this way, the toolbox of Egyptology might be expanded in manner that privileges visual culture, a category that the discipline has at times treated as secondary to philological material. In turn, this research might provide a contribution to gender studies more broadly. As in Egyptology, studies of goddesses or goddess-worshipping traditions in other cultural contexts tend to focus on the lived experience of the women in those settings, sometimes using gender processes in the divine sphere as a prism for understanding sociological phenomena in the society that worships them, for example in Lucinda Ramberg's work on Hindu communities in *Given to the Goddess* (2014). The current project seeks to centre goddesses as a focus of gender theory

in their own right, since they are agents and participants within the gender systems of a culture's worldview, and not simply symbols of those relationships.

### 1.3. Scholarly Foundations and Theoretical Frameworks

In the design and execution of this research, the work of several scholars was either directly drawn upon or looked to as a model. The utilised scholars and works are outlined below, and explanations are given of the study's theoretical basis and use of terms.

The presented research has relied heavily on the work of Gay Robins. Robins has published extensively on Egyptian art, as well as women's lives and representations, yet is also one of the scholars who has brought masculinity into Egyptological conversations surrounding gender (e.g. 2008). The work that has informed much of the theoretical foundation of this research, and guided its methodologies and execution, is Robins' models of compositional dominance in Egyptian art. Her 1994 article in the *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*— in which she outlines the structural principles through which the owner of a monument occupies the most prominent positions in its decoration, and husbands take precedence over wives— is a core text that has influenced the building of this study's models, the gathering of its data, and the interpretation of its findings.

A scholar whose work was not directly part of this research's framework in the same manner as Robins', yet was looked to as a model of methodological approaches, is Deborah Sweeney. Sweeney has also written on gender from multiple perspectives, and in relation to different gender categories. The specific work that has influenced the devising and execution of this research is Sweeney's 2002 article in the *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, in which she examines the representation and construction of gendered conversational behaviour in the Ramessid *Contendings of Horus and Seth*. Sweeney uses quantitative methods to assess the conversational strategies used in the tale, collating the

number of occasions that the main characters speak, the times they speak in particular locations, and the frequency with which they use different verb forms and rhetorical techniques, in order to build a comparative impression of how the characters' gender might affect the contexts and form of their speech. Sweeney's use of quantitative techniques to ground and inform discussions of gender processes was highly influential in designing the approach taken by this project. Such methods are particularly useful for the sorts of analyses presented in this thesis, which investigate the dynamic construction of goddesses' agency through relational assessments of compositions within a monument, seeking to then contextualise the demographics of agency within and between wider data sets. Therefore, while Sweeney's work has not been built into the framework of this research in the same manner as Robins', it has served as an important model.

Since the aim of this thesis is to examine the representation and construction of goddesses' gendered agency, the understanding and use of the term 'agency' must be defined, seeing as the concept forms the central lens through which gender processes will be analysed and is also a phenomenon that operates on multiple levels within the material under study. At its core, agency might be defined as the ability to create effects (e.g. Olabarria 2020, 15–23), whether these are events within the visual narrative of a scene or the effects created by the artwork itself (see below). As such, the agency of two-dimensional figures within the narratives of their compositions is expressed through, bound up in, and regenerated via their depicted actions, through which they create their effects. The process is one of dialogue, a self-reinforcing cycle: an entity acts according to their relative freedoms or restrictions, in contexts in which it is possible or appropriate for them to do so, which in turn might reinforce structures that shape how and in what settings that entity can act. 'Gendered agency' describes the gendered dimension of this process. Indeed, agency and gender are closely interwoven, as a culture's formulations of gender

categories are often articulated through understandings or expectations of how individuals within those groups can or should act, from their roles in daily life through to how they dress or use their bodies. Therefore, this study centres representations of gendered agency as a means of understanding goddesses, since the nature of the category is likely bound up with, even defined by, what a goddess does and in what contexts.

Goddesses' gendered agency is examined in the following chapters through the representation of their roles and actions in compositions, using methods that will be explicated in the sections below (see §1.5). However, to come to a fuller understanding of the nature and functioning of this agency, we cannot only consider goddesses' images within the context of their scenes. These depictions occur in ritually potent and generative environments, spaces that form decorative totalities, and thus images of female deities might interact with the space and its other depictions in ways that facilitate (or at least do not counteract) the functions of the space itself. Therefore, gendered agency is not only represented within compositions, but is actively exerted by the images themselves. The agency of images is understood here in light of the seminal work of anthropologist Alfred Gell, who argued that works of art are social agents. Gell defines agency as a theorisation of processes of doing, one that incorporates 'indexes and effects' (Gell 1998, ix). A work of art is an index, a material entity that motivates inferences, responses, or interpretations, and itself embodies and exercises agency through a complex series of relationships between artist, what is represented, and its audiences (*ibid.*). These indexes may have been especially active, even crucial, in the context of tombs and temples, with their respective functions of ensuring continued existence after death and maintaining the cosmic order. Therefore, in examining the representation and construction of goddesses' gendered agency, this study not only looks at compositions themselves, but to how those images interact with wider decorative programmes and their functions.

Moving away from the ideas of agency that underpin this work, it is appropriate to briefly note an aspect of discourse that is not included in the project's theoretical framework. The changes that occurred within tomb decoration in this period, which resulted in the greater number and range of deities that partly underlie the study's focus on Ramessid material (see above and §1.4.1), were concurrent with increasingly expressive forms of personal religious display that some authors have described as the emergence of 'personal piety'. Such forms of display are said to include votive stelae such as those of Ramose that are included in this study, and the idea of an emergent personal piety has led to characterisations of Ramessid non-royal tomb chapels as small private temples (e.g. Seyfried 1987; Assmann 2003; Dodson 2010). The notion of 'tomb as temple' is addressed in more detail in the overview of tomb and temple material given in the following section (§1.4.1), so at this juncture it is simply noted that the 'personal piety' phenomenon is not included or addressed by this thesis, as (following Baines and Froot) it has likely been overdrawn in the literature. The artistic developments of the Ramessid period probably do not represent a change in private religiosity, since individual or familial investment in certain deities is attested in earlier periods. Theophoric names, for instance, appear even in the earliest sources (Baines 1991, 176–8). Evolutions in religious expression in the Ramessid period likely constitute changes in the decorum surrounding display, not in beliefs about non-royal relationships with the divine (see Baines and Froot 2011, 7–17). Therefore, ideas surrounding personal piety were not a stimulus for this enquiry, and thus have not been incorporated into the theoretical foundations of the thesis.

Before providing overviews of the material that forms the data sets, and the models and methodologies used to investigate that material, the use of certain terms in the following chapters should be explained. The first of these terms are the designations 'goddess', 'god', and 'deity'. It is common in English, as in Egyptian, to refer to a group

of deities as ‘gods’. This is not a neutral linguistic feature; where a generalising, gender non-specific plural noun is the same as the plural for a group of male members of that category, an equivalence is drawn between maleness and the category itself. It is a speech act that implies maleness to be the default state from which femaleness is a deviation. For example, in English there is a linguistic distinction between actors and actresses, albeit one whose use has decreased in popularity. Within this paradigm, ‘actor’ is a masculine term and ‘actress’ a feminine one, yet ‘actors’ as a plural noun might refer to both male and female performers. ‘Actresses’, however, always refers to a group of female performers. Maleness is therefore treated as the default state of subjects, only the exceptions to which need to be specified.

Similar processes occur in Egyptian, where *ntr* refers to a male divinity and *ntrt* a female one, yet the plural *ntrw* can refer to both a group of male divinities and a collection of deities of any and all genders, the term *ntrwt* being used to specifically indicate a group of goddesses. While the treatment of these terms in Egyptian and English is analogous, their use introduces an element of ambiguity that is unhelpful for discussions of gendered agency, which is partly formed through the relationality of gender categories. Therefore, this thesis uses the word ‘god’ to refer specifically to a male deity, and ‘goddess’ to a female one. A general plurality of divine beings will be called ‘deities’, ‘divinities’, or a variant thereof. ‘Gods’ is only ever used in a generalising sense in the context of translations, to reflect the Egyptian, or in quotes such as that by Zivie-Coche at the beginning of the chapter. In all other cases, ‘gods’ is used to refer specifically to a group of male deities.

The use of the term ‘deity’ should itself be outlined. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to interrogate or present a definition of what an Egyptian deity is. That is a subject already discussed and debated in works by Erik Hornung (e.g. 1982), Jan Assmann (e.g.

2001), and other leading figures in the field. A working definition is all that is needed for this study, since there appears to have been little classificatory distinction between supernatural beings. Baines notes that *ntr* is applied to a wide variety of figures in underworld books— including those who may appear hellish to a modern viewer— and argues that it is simplest to take the word as denoting any being that does not belong to the strictly human or everyday sphere (Baines 1985, 216). Indeed, the *Onomasticon of Amenemope* makes no distinctions in the beings ranked above the transfigured dead, other than those of gender. Therefore, this study’s focus on gendered agency might itself be a means of defining the nature of deities, primarily those that participate in the category of *ntrwt* listed in the onomasticon. For the purposes of these investigations, a deity is taken to be any supernatural being, including deified royalty. These beings are investigated through analysis of their images, or as they are often called in the coming discussions, ‘divine figures’. The methods of treating and identifying divine figures are explicated in §1.5.

The final terms whose use require clarification are ‘androcentric’, and ‘male/female’. The word ‘androcentric’ has already been used and contextually defined at the beginning of the chapter, in relation to the impression of the default status of maleness created by the formulation of gendered terms in Egyptian. This privileging of the male, and the sociocultural dynamics that it might entail or represent, might be referred to as patriarchy. While ancient Egyptian society might indeed be characterised as patriarchal, this thesis instead uses the term ‘androcentric’, as the impression created by ‘patriarchy’ is perhaps more universalising and monolithic than is appropriate for the contexts under discussion. To refer to a dynamic or structure as androcentric is to acknowledge in literal terms the centrality of maleness therein, whilst leaving space for nuance, a plurality of experiences within that dynamic, and of its evolving or fluid nature. As shall emerge over the course of the following chapters, many goddesses are situated in unequal conceptual

structures, yet many are able to exercise forms of agency within and through them, a situation for which the term ‘patriarchal’ might be overly simplistic.

In defining the use of ‘androcentric’, and through much of the introductory chapter thus far, the terms ‘male’ and ‘female’ have been used without explanation. These categories are not natural or obvious, since they are interpretations of physical sex characteristics, which are themselves culturally (even surgically) defined (see Fausto-Sterling 2000, 30–44). The terms are used in the context of this thesis to describe the gender of figures according to Egyptian formulations, which appear to have been largely binary and biologically essentialist. The figures in visual media to whom gendered terms are applied, for instance in captions, tend to share in suites of similar features; breasts, broad hips, and a pubic triangle for ‘female’ figures, and flatter chests, narrower hips, and occasionally penises for ‘male’ figures (Robins 2015, 122–6). These categories and their associated features might be permeable in certain contexts, as suggested by the contemporary literary text *The Tale of the Two Brothers* (Gardiner 1932, 9–29) in which the self-castrated Bata tells his divinely-created wife that he cannot protect her from the threatening presence of a personified Sea, saying ‘I am a woman as you are’ (ibid., 10.1–2). However, even in this instance Bata is referred to with masculine suffix pronouns, perhaps indicating that while there might be some fluidity in these binary gender categories, they were treated as ultimately immutable.

Anthropomorphic divine figures also participate in gendered distinctions that utilise these sex characteristics, and even images of goddesses in fully animal form share many of the same gendered epithets (e.g. *nbt pt*/Lady of the Sky: Leitz 2002, IV, 49–50), as well as often having names that accord with or are constructed using feminine grammatical gender (e.g. *Mrt:s-gr*/She-Who-Loves-Silence: Leitz 2002, III, 343). Therefore, ancient Egyptian goddesses appear to participate in ‘femaleness’ within the context of a binary gender

system that incorporated physical characteristics, the materialised of which in visual representations is the key access point of this study. The terms ‘female’ and ‘male’ are used to reflect that binary model, but in the knowledge that gender and sex as wider sociocultural phenomena are far more complex.

## 1.4. Overview of the Material

### 1.4.1. Private Tombs in the Ramessid Period

An overview is now provided of the study’s two primary data sets. The following sections are not intended as a comprehensive treatment of tombs and temples of the Ramessid period, but to provide suitable context for the forthcoming analyses. Therefore, the discussion is primarily concerned with details that explicate the form and use of the corpus, or else have repercussions for the interpretation of the case studies presented in the following chapters.

We look first to private tombs, the highest concentration of extant examples being in the Theban necropolis. The second largest concentration is at Saqqara, and tombs of the period are found in smaller numbers at other sites in the Nile valley, such as Sedment (PM IV, 117), el-Mashayikh (PM V, 28–9), Abydos (PM V, 65, 68, 74), and el-Kab (PM V, 176, 181–2), as well as at Delta sites such as Tell el-Yahudiyeh (PM IV, 57) and Tell Basta (PM IV, 32–3).

The predominance of surviving Theban monuments might give the impression that Thebes was the most prestigious centre of elite burial in this period time, yet Geoffrey Thorndike Martin notes that comparatively few of the ‘great officials’ were buried there; the occupants of Theban tombs are mostly elites concerned with the government of Upper Egypt, Nubia, and the administration of the cult of Amun (Martin 1991, 26). In the immediate post-Amarna period, during the reigns of Tutankhamun, Ay, Horemheb, and the

early Ramessid kings, many of the highest administrators were buried at Memphis (van Dijk 1988, 37). Instead, the uneven distribution of surviving monuments is likely due to factors of preservation. As will be discussed in more detail shortly, tombs of different regions exhibit variations in their architectural vocabularies. In the broadest possible terms, Theban tombs and their chapels are predominantly rock-cut with freestanding elements, while Memphite tomb chapels are freestanding with rock-cut burial chambers, and some of the few surviving examples of Delta tombs from the period are cut into the gravel with mudbrick superstructures (see below). The freestanding Memphite tomb chapels lend themselves to quarrying and collapse, while many Delta sites have been lost due to the movement of the Nile branches over time, and conditions there are unfavourable to the survival of mudbrick; the soil is generally wetter than in the Nile valley due to the multiple channels of the river and seasonal Mediterranean rains (Bard 2015<sup>2</sup>, 55–8). As a result of such factors, the number of extant Ramessid private tombs are relatively low at the period's principle administrative centres of Memphis and Per-Ramesses (Frood 2007, 20), with consequences for the size and shape of the data sets utilised in this study.

The architectural layout of Ramessid private tombs, as already intimated, is variable, differing between regions as well as between individual monuments. A broad overview of the main regional styles is given here, beginning with a note on Delta tombs, albeit a brief one since these are fewer in number and are not treated as part of this study's analyses. The surviving Delta material suggests a markedly different local tradition to those of Memphis and Thebes, in which tombs are cut into the soil or gravel and topped with freestanding brick-built superstructures, usually arranged as a set of chambers opening off a shared central corridor. A relatively well-preserved example of such a monument is located at Tell Basta, being the 20<sup>th</sup> Dynasty tomb of the viceroy of Kush Hori I, located on a mound 200m north of the Great Temple (Habachi 1957, 9; nearby

tomb of son, also named Hori: PM IV, 32). Hori's tomb is built of baked mudbrick and consists of a central corridor with three rooms coming off on each side (Rooms A–F; see Fig. 1). These side chambers once had vaulted ceilings, with Room B being used for storage while the others were burial chambers (*ibid.*, 97–101, pl. 30–8). A similar arrangement of rooms is replicated in a 20<sup>th</sup> dynasty tomb at Tell el-Yahudiyeh, where painted ceramic coffins were placed in parallel rows on a floor of basalt blocks or desert sand, each coffin and its associated funerary assemblage being separated by a mudbrick arch (PM IV, 57: Naville and Griffith 1890, 42, pl. 13).

Tombs of the Theban and Memphite necropolises consist of both rock-cut and freestanding elements, though with different emphases and associated architectural vocabularies. Many tombs of both areas conform to a similar schematic layout; an outer courtyard, an inner chapel for the mortuary cult, and subterranean burial chambers where the occupants were interred. However, as noted above, Theban tomb chapels tend to be predominantly rock-cut with the addition of freestanding elements, while Memphite tomb chapels are entirely freestanding with rock-cut burial chambers beneath. Friederike Kampp-Seyfried provides a useful schema for describing a 'typical' Ramessid Theban tomb (2003, 7–10; see Fig. 2), though not all elements were necessarily always present in a single monument. Kampp-Seyfried divides the Ramessid Theban tomb into three levels; upper, middle, and lower. The upper level of this idealised tomb consists of a surmounting pyramid, or at Deir el-Medina the tomb chapel itself could take the form of a small pyramid with a vaulted interior (Bruyère and Kuentz 2015<sup>2</sup>, pl. 1; see Fig. 3). Next is the middle level, which consists of the outer forecourt and the inner areas of the chapel, the latter being the rock-cut halls and the area for the mortuary cult. The forecourts and surrounding structures of some larger monuments were greatly elaborated, for instance that of the 20<sup>th</sup> Dynasty high priest Ramessesnakht at Dra Abu el-Naga (reused from an 18th

Dynasty original); the tomb boasted a mudbrick pylon gateway, two forecourts, and sandstone columns topped with Hathor capitals in the inner court (Rummel 2013a, 226 fig. 8). Last comes the lower level, being the hidden subterranean burial chambers. Assmann characterises these lower areas as pertaining to what he terms the ‘secrecy function’ of the tomb (2003, 46), serving to hide and protect the body. Assmann’s other proposed functions will shortly be discussed, and problematised, in the discussion of Ramessid tomb decoration.

The plans of Memphite tomb chapels are similar to their Theban counterparts, though are executed as freestanding buildings rather than being partially dug into the cliffside (see Fig. 4). From the late 18th Dynasty to the reign of Ramesses II, these structures were built of mudbrick faced with relief-decorated limestone revetment, though from the latter part of Ramesses’ reign onwards the mudbrick was replaced by walls built entirely of limestone, usually hollow skin walls filled with rubble (van Dijk 1988, 42–8). The freestanding nature of Memphite chapels made them less durable than those of the Theban necropolis, thus much of Memphite mortuary architecture is now, to quote Kenneth Kitchen, a ‘crowd of fragments that now populate the world’s museums’ (1979, 272). Memphite tombs consist of an open court—some with and some without columns—which contains the shaft leading to the subterranean burial chambers (van Dijk 1988, 42). Kitchen notes that the tomb chapels were often oriented on an east-west axis, with the entrance to the court in the east and an enclosed cult room in the west, larger examples having elaborations such additional rooms and courts or even an entrance pylon (Kitchen 1979, 272–4). Like at Thebes, Memphite chapels could be topped with a pyramid, the presence of which can be inferred from idealised representations of tomb chapels at the site (Quibell 1912, pl. 80.10) and the discovery of pyramidions, such as an 18th Dynasty example now held in Leiden (Hayes 1938, 17).

There are, of course, variations and exceptions to these patterns. Some are likely due to concerns over space, as in the 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty tomb of Mose— one of the recurrent examples in the coming chapters— whose cult chapel is in the north-west corner of the structure and out of alignment with the main entrance which is in the south of the court rather than the west, likely due to the chapel’s construction in an already crowded location (Málek 1981, 158–60; see Gaballa 1977, pl. 1). Other variations include smaller, schematised versions of larger monuments, such as the tiny chapel of Khay whose forecourt is wider than the chapel itself (Martin et al. 2001, 10), or the tomb of Raia that appears to have had no forecourt but a small brick pyramid (PM III:2<sup>2</sup>, 663–5; Martin 1991, 124; Martin 1985, 11). However, all Memphite Ramessid tombs are united by their fragmentary state, a quality that significantly reduces the number of monuments that are usable in this study’s analyses (see §1.5.1).

Having outlined the distributions and architectural arrangements of Ramessid private tombs, attention now turns to their decoration, a subject for which the writings of Assmann and Hofmann have been highly influential. It should first be noted that, just as general patterns in architectural schemes should not be accepted as absolute paradigms, so too trends in Ramessid tomb decoration are not hard and fast rules that exclude exceptions or variations. Hofmann notes that the post-Amarna period is characterised by a simultaneity of styles at various developmental stages, to the extent that it is difficult to identify one clear developmental trajectory. She credits this pluralism to uncertainty and experimentation in representational norms during an attempted return to orthodoxy following the Amarna period, which resulted in various combinations of traditional and innovative artistic styles and techniques (Hofmann 2004, 119). However, as Strudwick maintains, the role of the Amarna episode in driving representational changes can perhaps be overemphasised (Strudwick 1994, 330). Rather than a tumultuous disruption from

which new decorative patterns were born, the Amarna period might instead have been a catalyst for changes that were already taking place.

While a number of decorative features come to full fruition during the Ramessid period, such as yellow ‘monochrome’ painting of scenes of which there are particularly striking examples at Deir el-Medina (see Bruyère 1952; Hofmann 2003; 2004, 69–73, 88–90), of most consequence to this study are developments in the organisation of scenes. Two new principles enter tomb decoration at this time, being what Assmann terms the ‘film strip style’ and the vertical axis (Assmann 1987, 35–6; 2001, 194–6). The film strip style breaks the unity of wall and image; unlike tombs of the pre-Amarna 18th Dynasty, in which compositions are bounded to a single wall, the decoration of Ramessid tombs uses registers as the main organisational units, and does not restrict those units to a single surface. Scenes are therefore able to wrap around corners, resembling a film reel. A wall can carry two or more registers of distinct scenes, rather than a single wall carrying one cohesive composition. The ‘film strip’ allows multiple thematic complexes per wall, which in turn allows walls to be divided into several registers of different scenes, thereby introducing a vertical dimension to decorative organisation (Strudwick 1994, 323).

This dimension is what Assmann terms the vertical axis. According to Assmann, pre-Amarna decorative programmes are organised according to ‘semantic axes’ – north-south, east-west, and inner-outer – to which certain scenes or themes can be attached, for example the south walls of 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty long halls often carry scenes of the funerary procession, while the north walls tend to depict the Opening of the Mouth ceremony (Assmann 1987, 36; 2001, 194–5). In Ramessid tombs, the film strip style introduces an upper-lower axis, in which the scenes of upper registers carry images of deities while the lower registers often depict the funeral or mortuary cult (Assmann 1987, 36; 2005, 49). It is the introduction of the vertical axis that allows the proliferation of divine images in

tombs of the Ramessid period, thereby facilitates this study's analyses, and the association of upper areas with higher status images creates a dimension of vertical hierarchy that is utilised when considering the placement of goddess images within tomb schemes.

In most locations, Ramessid tombs have undecorated burial chambers, their scenes and texts occurring in the accessible chapel areas of the tomb that Assmann characterises as serving the 'memory function' (Assmann 2003, 46–8; 2005, 12–4) of preserving or constructing the tomb owner's social identity, a process that can utilise biographical representation in texts (see Froot 2007, 1–4, 28–9) and in scenes. However, at Deir el-Medina, burial chambers are extensively decorated, something that has been attributed to the role of their owners in the building and decoration of royal tombs (e.g. Hofmann 2004, 67). Whatever the cause, the position of some scenes in sealed burial chambers and others in accessible chapels might have implications for their functions, which should be considered in their interpretation. While it seems too generalising to assert that only scenes and texts in accessible areas can pertain to an individual's social identity— if the royal tomb builders decorated their burial chambers in emulation of the environments they constructed, then the scenes of these areas are very much tied to social identity regardless of their content— there are perhaps different dimensions of viewership at work, thus the scenes in chapels and in burial chambers might achieve interrelating functions but in ways that sometimes differ. This interpretation appears to be supported by the presented case studies, for example in Chapter 2, where the aforementioned tomb of Paser at Sheikh Abd el-Qurna utilises an image of a goddess with multiple associations to evoke both funerary ritual and an aspect of his biography, while in the tomb of Sennedjem at Deir el-Medina (see §1.6) an image of a goddess near the door of the burial chamber appears to facilitate his movement in and out of the tomb, precisely so that he is able to continue to participate in the society of the living.

The decoration of Theban and Memphite tombs is similar in content and governing principles, yet as is the case in their architectural arrangements, there are regional particularities. The decoration of Theban tombs is executed using a range of techniques, from painted plaster to relief carved into wet gypsum (Manniche 1987, 66), yet there is a tendency towards predominantly painted decoration. Tombs with extensive relief decoration do occur—perhaps where the owner’s resources or the quality of the rock allowed—such as the tomb of Paser at Sheikh Abd el-Qurna (discussed in Chapter 2: see §1.6). Meanwhile, Memphite tomb decoration is typically executed in sunk relief (see Hofmann 2004, 101–10), perhaps due to the chapels’ nature as freestanding structures. Sunk relief is commonly used for exterior areas in Egyptian stone architecture, since raised relief would lose definition in bright sunlight (Schäfer 1974, 78–9). Furthermore, Kitchen notes that Memphite decorative programmes contain locally-specific motifs or variations thereof; the reveals of entrance doorways can carry scenes showing the tomb owner being censured (rather than worshipping the sun, as is standard in Theban tombs), accompanied by Opening of the Mouth formulae (Kitchen 1979, 276). It will be suggested in Chapter 4 that such regional decorative differences might also include preferences for how goddesses are depicted when paired with other deities (see §1.6).

A final note that should be made regarding Ramessid private tombs— one that draws upon both their architectural features and their decoration— regards the model of ‘tomb as temple’ that recurs within the literature on these monuments. Assmann conceptualises the increase in deities within private tomb decoration, together with architectural features such as pylon gateways and pillared courts, as indicating an increasing sacralisation of these spaces, arguing that Ramessid tombs introduced a ‘cult function’ in addition to those of memory and secrecy (2001, 195–8; 2005, 46–50). Assmann’s interpretation is followed by Kampp-Seyfried, who characterises the upper,

middle, and lower levels of her scheme as being associated with solar, ‘ceremonial’, and Osirian cults respectively (2005, 8–9). Furthermore, the previously cited tomb of Ramessesnakht at Dra Abu el-Naga was connected, via a causeway, to a minor wadi that connects to the main processional route of the Theban west bank (Rummel 2013b, 14–5).

These features might appear to support the idea of the Ramessid tomb as a private temple, yet as with the purported influence of the Amarna period on the development of Ramessid decorative patterns, the model has likely been overdrawn. Assmann himself notes that the increasing depiction of deities within private tombs was a process stretching back to the Middle Kingdom, and that continued well into the Late Period (2003, 51–2). Regarding Kampp-Seyfried’s divisions of cult associations, the Sennedjem case study in Chapter 2 is an example of the extensive solar imagery in the decorated burial chambers of Deir el-Medina (see §1.6; §2.4), which complicates the interpretation of the lower areas of a tomb as purely Osirian in nature. Strudwick has noted that architectural features such as pillared courts had their origins in the pre-Amarna 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty (1994, 322–3), and even alignment with processional ways does not necessarily indicate that Ramessid tombs are conceptualised as temples; the small Middle Kingdom chapels that overlook Abydos’ main processional route housed stelae of a memorialising or mortuary character (O’Connor 1985; 2009, 92–6; Richards 2005, 39–41). Therefore, as appears to be the case with material pertaining to the ‘personal piety’ phenomenon (see §1.3), there is probably not a ‘fundamental change in the concept of the tomb’ (Assmann 2005, 51) during the Ramessid period. Instead, the features and functions of these monuments can be conceptualised within larger processes of development. Ramessid private tombs were no more ‘sacralised’ than those of previous periods. What may have developed, rather than radically changed, was the vocabulary with which that sanctity was expressed.

#### 1.4.2. Ramessid Temple Environments

Some brief notes will now be made regarding the construction and decoration of temple environments during the Ramessid period, before discussing how the specific case studies discussed in the following chapters were chosen from the wider data sets. The methods of collecting and analysing this data are explicated in §1.5.

The term ‘temple environments’ is used here quite deliberately. As noted by scholars such as Penelope Wilson, some of the main state temples were continually added to, expanded, and rebuilt by successive rulers, so that they may well have seemed like perpetual building sites (Wilson 2010, 782). In such contexts it is perhaps more accurate to speak of Ramessid areas or environments than ‘Ramessid temples’. There are examples of entire temples of this period being built by a single ruler— Ramesses II was a particularly active contributor in this regard— yet many of these do not survive in a state that allows their decorative programme to be comprehensively assessed. Ramesses’ temple at Abydos, for instance, is in places preserved to just a few courses of stone (see Iskander and Goelet, 2015). Some of the best-preserved Ramessid temple environments are used within this thesis as key sources; these will be introduced shortly.

The kings of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Dynasties built and expanded temples across Egypt and its territories. However, in line with the wider patterns of preservation that affect the corpus of private tombs, the temples of Upper Egypt and particularly the Theban area are among the best-preserved. It has already been noted that the administrative centres in this period were at Memphis as Per-Ramesses, which were themselves foci of temple building; the poem praising Per-Ramesses in P. Anastasi II describes a landscape of numerous and interconnecting cultic foundations (Gardiner 1937, 12–3.4), several of which have been identified at the modern site of Qantir (Bietak and Forstner-Müller 2011, 31–40).

Nonetheless, the same taphonomic processes that affected the tombs of these areas also

affected the temples. Baines notes that north of Abydos, few if any temples survive in a state that is anything like their ancient form (1997, 226), one factor in which being the quarrying of these structures in later periods (e.g. Martin 1991, 15). Analyses of Ramessid temple environments— including this one— are therefore skewed towards southern regions.

One of the main innovations in the architecture and decoration of Ramessid temple environments occurred during the reign of Seti I, this being the introduction of schematised papyrus columns. As attested on a grand scale in the Great Hypostyle Hall in the temple of Amun at Karnak (PM II<sup>2</sup>, 50–1), Seti replaced the bundled-shaft papyrus columns of the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty with smooth sided versions, enabling a register of cultic scenes to be introduced just below the midpoint of the column's height (Brand 2018, 47–52). Seti seems to have preferred keeping the decoration of columns limited to just the cultic register and motifs at the top and base, as can be seen in the second hypostyle hall of his temple at Abydos (PM VI<sup>2</sup>, 9; Calverley et al. 1958, viii, pl. 67–78), yet Ramesses II and other later kings came to fill the empty spaces with cartouches and other pieces of titulary and heraldic imagery (Brand 2018, 52–7). Seti's innovation expanded the areas of the temple that could carry scenes of divine interaction, and in so doing provided a means through which this thesis, which uses his Abydos temple as a case study (see §1.5.1), is able to observe the use of goddesses and their agency to delineate decorative areas in that space (see §1.6).

The Ramessid period also witnessed the pinnacle of Egyptian rock-cut temples in Nubia, in the form of the twin temples built by Ramesses II at Abu Simbel (PM VII, 95–117; see §1.5.1). Egyptian rulers had been carving temples into the cliffs and mountainsides of Lower Nubia since the reigns of Hatshepsut and Thutmose III, who built a temple at Ellesiya (PM VII, 74, 90–1; Ullmann 2016, 155). The temples at Abu Simbel, however, are not only far larger and more elaborate than their predecessors, but mark the

point at which rock-cut temples fully incorporated the floor plan of freestanding axial temples (*ibid.*, 155–6), something maintained in Ramesses’ subsequent monuments of this kind at Derr (PM VII, 74, 84–90), Wadi es-Sebua (PM VII, 53–63), and Gerf Hussein (PM VII, 32–7).

It should be noted here that the temples of Abu Simbel, and also that of Seti I at Abydos, are sometimes referred to in the literature as ‘mortuary temples’. Temples of this kind incorporate the cult of the king and perhaps other members of the royal family, and have thus been treated by some authors as a separate category to ‘divine’ temples. Works such as Harold H. Nelson’s study of the New Kingdom temples of western Thebes have cemented the term ‘mortuary temple’ in the vocabulary used to describe those monuments (1942, 127–8), and it has been used to describe other temples that seem to follow suit, such as at Abu Simbel and Abydos. However, this study follows the position taken by Gerhard Haeny, who shows that there is no clear distinction between temples that incorporate royal cult and those that do not, whether that be in form, function, or designation. For instance, Haeny notes that the term ‘Mansion of Millions of years’, often taken to indicate a mortuary temple, is in fact applicable to a wide range of monuments (see Haeny 1997, 87–90, 107–26). Therefore, the only distinction that this study draws between temple environments is in regard to the gender of their occupants.

## 1.5. Models and Methodologies

### 1.5.1. The Selection and Treatment of the Data Sets

Having explained the focus of this study, the scholarly and theoretical foundations on which it draws, and given an overview of some of the most pertinent aspects of its chosen source material, the remaining sections of this introductory chapter describe how the study’s data sets were drawn from the wider corpus, as well as the methods and models

used to interrogate that data. Finally, an overview is given of the forthcoming chapters, including an explanation of their structure and a general note on their content.

Due to the uneven distributions of Ramessid private tombs, and their small numbers in most locations, the study has focused on tombs from the Theban and Memphite necropolises. The aim of understanding goddesses' gendered agency requires the observation of wider patterns in their depiction as well as analyses of individual monuments, thus the two largest concentrations of tombs were selected. It was also desirable to have more than one geographical location represented, so that inter-regional patterns or differences might be observed.

The Theban and Memphite samples were compiled using publications or associated archival materials (Ramose's stelae were examined similarly, using Karen Exell's collation of Ramessid votive stelae as a starting point: Exell 2006). Tombs were therefore omitted from the sample if they had no publication or archival materials, or else if this material did not record enough of their decoration— or the decoration itself was too poorly preserved— to allow a minimum number of ten 'divine figures' to be discerned (these are defined in §1.5.2). An exception was made for the Memphite tomb of Raia (see Table 2); this small tomb chapel has only eight preserved divine figures, yet much of its decorative programme is observable (see Martin 1985, pl 14–25), and so these eight are likely representative of the original demographics of the monument. The criterion of ten figures was added in order to facilitate techniques of statistical description. Drawing on Sweeney's use of quantitative methods to provide an overview of the gendered conversational behaviour in *Horus and Seth*, this study uses percentages in order to build a general picture of the roles that goddess figures occupy within a monument. These roles are assessed according to a typology developed by the author, which will be described in the following subsection (§1.5.2). By creating these numerical overviews of individual decorative programmes, the

tombs that make up the two samples can be collated, the broader picture of goddesses' representational agency in those samples can be described, and any patterns that may exist within or between the samples can be identified.

However, due to the previously described disparities of preservation at Thebes and Memphis, there is a large discrepancy between the sizes of the two samples; the Theban sample consists of 43 monuments (see Table 1), around a quarter of locatable Ramessid Theban tombs (see Kampp 1996, I, 139–43; Manniche 1987, 132–46), while the Memphite sample contains just 7 (see Table 2). Questions of representativeness are therefore raised regarding the proposed statistical methods. Such questions might be addressed through the use of both mean and median averages in describing the attestations of goddesses' depicted roles in the data sets. If these two values are the same or very near each other, then the distribution of data points within that category— of the proportion of a tomb's goddess figures are made up by a certain role— have an even distribution, which might be suggestive of a fairly consistent pattern. Such a pattern does not necessarily supersede the raw data itself, but instead provides a sense of the wider trends into which the individual case studies of the following analyses might be situated. Conversely, if the mean and median averages of the different categories are far apart, then they are skewed, showing that there is an uneven distribution of values. However, the shape of that skew— that is, whether the mean is higher than the median, or vice versa— shows to which end of that range the data leans. These are the quantitative methods used to describe the data sets, and to contextualise the case studies selected for more closer individual analysis, and thus have contributed to the form of the presented samples.

The case studies and recurrent examples drawn from the samples of private tombs were chosen because they either exemplify, complicate, or contradict wider patterns, or otherwise provide opportunities to deepen understandings of how goddesses' gendered

agency might function. Some monuments are used at multiple points in the thesis, since their decorative programmes contain examples of several of the features or processes under discussion. The reasons for their use are given in the introductory sections of each chapter. The choice of the temple material, however, should be explained here.

The selected temple environments are the Small Temple of Abu Simbel (PM VII, 111–7; see Plan 7), the temple of Seti I at Abydos (PM VI, 1–27; see Plans 5–6), and the Great Hypostyle Hall at Karnak (PM II<sup>2</sup>, 43–50; see Plan 8). Several reasons underlie these choices. Firstly, they all have relatively complete decorative programmes that are largely bounded to the Ramessid period. Indeed, the focus of analysis at Abydos is on areas built by Seti I (the second hypostyle hall and the adjoining chapels) and not those completed by Ramesses II (Mariette 1869, I, 9–14; David 2016, 31–2, 46–7; O’Connor 2009, 46), thus the Abydos case study joins the Small Temple in representing a coherently executed, though not necessarily complete decorative scheme. The monuments were also selected due to the different positions that goddesses have within the narratives of their decorative programmes, due to their dedications. The Small Temple is dedicated to Hathor (and to Nefertari; see §3.3), and it might therefore be considered a female-focused space. Meanwhile, Seti’s Abydos temple has seven chapels, one of which is dedicated to Isis (see §3.2; §4.2); it is a space shared between deities of different genders, or rather, as will be argued in Chapter 3, it is a space of spaces. The Great Hypostyle Hall is part of the temple of Amun, thus its decorative programme centres a god. The use of these three environments therefore allows goddesses’ agency to be observed across contexts in whose decorative programmes they are central or primary, where they have (seemingly) shared centrality, and where centrality is held by a male deity.

The treatment of the temple material uses similar methods of statistical description to characterise the patterns of goddesses’ agency in those spaces, in addition to the close

analysis of specific features or organisational patterns. The quantitative methods allow the comparison of depictions of goddesses' roles between the respective temple contexts, and also between tomb and temple decoration more broadly, allowing us to consider how the ritual function of a space might affect the way goddesses are represented within it, and in turn how their agency might align with or facilitate that function. Yet the analysis of temple decoration does not only occur at this broad level; as with the funerary material, closer analysis is used to interrogate the workings of gendered agency. The temples at Abu Simbel and Abydos have been used the most extensively for this purpose due to the possible representational tensions visible therein (see §1.6), yet the Great Hypostyle Hall proves particularly useful in the examination of the gendered dynamics of group contexts, which are rarer and may even be purposefully avoided in the other two settings (*ibid.*).

These are the processes by which the study's primary data sets were formed, and some of the methods through which they have been treated. Before progressing to the models that have been used to carry out these analyses, and (in the case of the proposed typology of roles) had a hand in the structure of the thesis itself, it should be noted that the same methods of statistical description have not been applied to the study's secondary or supplementary material, namely the votive stelae of Ramose. These objects, while forming a bounded corpus dedicated by a single individual, cannot be subjected to the same forms of relational analysis as a tomb or temple programme, primarily because not all of them have known archaeological contexts. The stelae are therefore treated on an individual basis, included in discussions where they pertain to wider patterns.

#### 1.5.2. Analytical Models: Identifying Goddess Figures and Their Roles

To conduct these analyses, agency of goddesses has been observed and assessed through the roles that they occupy in compositions, and how agency is sited within the actions and

interactions that constitute these roles. To make such observations, divine figures— defined above as being any image of a deity— must first be identified. While perhaps seeming a simple task, to carry it out demands that one consider whether representations of statues, divine standards, and other objects should be understood as ‘divine figures’. Identifying divine figures, let alone goddess figures, might therefore be more complex than at first sight, and so the approach taken by this study should be outlined.

The notion of agency has once again been employed to address the issue. An image has been taken to represent a divine presence if it has observable agency within the composition, either through conducting an action or interacting with another figure via ritual engagement, such as a tomb owner making offerings before a deity or a statue of one. For example, in the tomb of Neferrenpet at el-Khokha (TT 178: PM I:1<sup>2</sup>, 282–5; see Plan 1), a scene on the top right-hand corner of the north wall of the inner room depicts an anthropomorphised *djed* pillar in a barque, accompanied by a jackal-headed deity and two anthropomorphised *ankh* and *was* signs. These two symbols are holding standards, one topped by the figure of a canine and the other by that of an ibis (PM I:1<sup>2</sup>, 282–5; Hofmann 1995, 70–1, col. pl. 9a; see Fig. 5). The register wraps around onto the west wall, where figures of Neferrenpet and his wife Mutemwia make offerings to the group. Their captioned speech addresses not just Osiris and Anubis, but also Wepwawet and Thoth, who are represented by their standards.

In the above example, the tomb owner addresses Wepwawet and Thoth through two objects that depict them, thereby indicating that the gods were understood to be present and active through these objects. The two standards are therefore included among depictions of divine beings in the monument. In contrast, there is a depiction of a funerary procession in the outer room of TT 178 which includes images of the hearse, which is surmounted by two images of Isis and Nephthys, as well as a recumbent jackal (PM I:1<sup>2</sup>,

284; Hofmann 1995, col. pl. 7b; see Fig. 6). The figures probably represent statuettes, and do not participate in interactions that are analogous with the emblems in the inner room. They are therefore excluded from the tally of divine figures in TT 178.

Having identified divine figures, and then ascertained which are female through the binary gender markers previously discussed, the roles of those figures must be characterised and assessed. To achieve this, a working typology has been developed for the roles fulfilled by goddesses in two-dimensional compositions, comprising six categories; individual agents or recipients, non-kin co-agents, kin co-agents, counterparts, supporters, and collective agents or recipients. These classifications, further explicated below, are based on the activities that goddesses carry out in their depictions, and whether these are conducted individually, dually, or collectively, the latter indicating three or more actors. The number of figures within a goddess' compositional unit is used in order to observe whether her agency in performing an action is her own, shared with another deity (or indeed directed towards another deity who is the focus of that action), or is instead situated at the group level. To discern the activity itself, and to characterise the relationships and interactions between figures, gesture and pose have been used as a point of access. Gesture is useful in the context of visual representation because, as semiotician Geneviève Calbris notes, 'gestural representation draws upon our common experience of the physical world' (Calbris 2011, 10–2). The ancient Egyptians would have understood gestures through a shared, culturally-moderated experience of their environment, these gestures being represented in visual art in a codified form.

However, the techniques through which people use their bodies vary cross-culturally (Bourdieu 2005, 43; Calbris 2011, 20), which could prove a complicating factor in the interpretation of Egyptian poses by modern audiences. To accommodate this, the contexts of gestures within compositions and wider visual traditions can be used to glean

something of their meaning. This is possible as gesture, in the context of figurative art, forms part of a visual communication system. As anthropologist Edward T. Hall noted (1981<sup>2</sup>, 97), any given communication system is composed of the interrelating aspects of its overall structure, its components, and the message itself. These inform and construct one another, thus the meaning of gesture might be reverse engineered from context.

Brigitte Dominicus applies a similar perspective to Egyptian material in her 1994 monograph on gesture, in which she uses both visual representations and their accompanying texts— primarily of the Old and Middle Kingdoms, yet also with Ramessid comparanda— to substantiate the meanings of gestures, such as the *nyny* action which can be understood through such contextualising methods to be a gesture of purification and welcome (Dominicus 1994, 38–44; Westendorf 1991). Thusly, gestures and poses might be used to characterise the roles that goddesses fulfil in tomb and temple decoration.

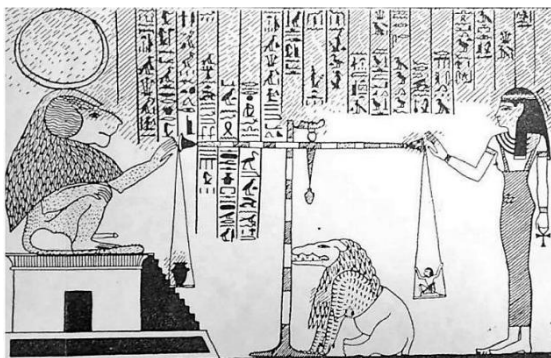
The typology of roles is presented below. It is an analytical device, yet one that has been constructed through extensive observations of Egyptian material, in order to remain as emic and culturally situated as possible. It is hoped that the use of the model might allow broad patterns to be observed in the depicted agency of goddesses, whilst limiting cultural impositions as far as is possible:

### Individual agent or recipient



A goddess acts alone or is the sole recipient of worship, either in a separate scene or as part of a larger composition. An example of this can be seen in the 19th Dynasty tomb of Nakhtamun at Deir el-Medina (TT 335: PM I:1<sup>2</sup>, 400–4), where the tomb owner's mother offers to the goddess Maat on the east wall of the burial chamber (PM I:1<sup>2</sup>, 403; Bruyère 1926, 164 fig. 110; see left).

### Non-kin co-agent



A goddess is engaged in the same activity as another deity, yet she is not that deity's consort nor is she connected to them via vertical or lateral kinship. This distinction was made in order to observe how co-agency in different contexts interacts with kin relationship. If the goddesses depicted actively participating in activities are usually shown alongside male deities who are their consorts, brothers, fathers, and so on, then their agency might be confined to those relationships or mediated by the gods they appear with. Non-kin co-agents are not connected to their co-actors in the same way, thus might retain more of their own agency. An example of such a pairing, shown here, occurs in the 19th Dynasty tomb of Qaha at Deir el-Medina (TT 360: PM I:1<sup>2</sup>, 425; see below); Maat adjusts the scales of judgement together with Thoth in his baboon form (Bruyère 1933, pl. 29). Maat can be associated with Thoth through narratives

of justification, as is discussed in Chapter 4 (see §1.6; §4.4.2), yet she is not connected to him by kinship or marriage.

### Kin co-agent



A similar arrangement to above, but involving two deities who *are* consorts or kin, for example the figures of Isis and Horus that bestow jubilee symbols upon the king in the temple of Seti I at Abydos, on the west wall of the second hypostyle hall (PM VI, 9; Calverley et al. 1958, pl. 13; see below). Co-agents

engage in the same activity as other deities, though might occupy separate (but visually complementary) positions in a scene, as in this example.

### Counterpart

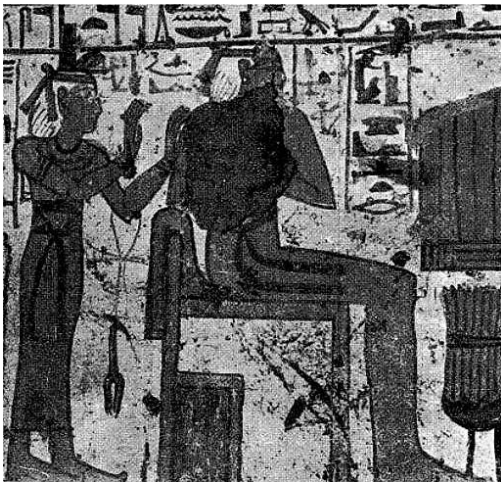


These can be distinguished from co-agents as they usually appear in a seated or standing pair, such as the enthroned figures of Amenhotep I and Ahmose-Nefertari in the outer room of TT 178 (PM I:1<sup>2</sup>, 284; Hofmann 1995, col. pl. 3b; see left). The association between counterparts is materialised through their physical closeness, as they occupy

what Hall— who theorised about the function of proxemics in social interaction— termed the close phase of ‘personal distance’ (Hall 1990<sup>2</sup>, 119–20). However, counterparts are not depicted laying hands on the accompanying figure, which would suggest that they are

fulfilling a supportive role (see below). Goddesses who are depicted as counterparts to male deities are often depicted behind them, in accordance with representational norms that male figures should occupy the most prominent positions in a scene (Robins 1994, 33–4). Goddesses can also be represented as counterparts to one another; on a fragment of a door reveal from the Memphite tomb of Mose (PM III:2<sup>2</sup>, 554), the deceased is shown offering before two pairs of goddesses, who appear in vertically arranged registers (Gaballa 1977, pl. 3–4).

### Supporter



Goddesses in this role are depicted in poses that indicate their primary role in the scene is to support the deity with whom they are paired, for example by resting a hand on their shoulder or standing with her arm around them. This is seen in the burial chamber of the tomb of Khaemteri at Deir el-Medina (TT 220: PM I:1<sup>2</sup>, 322) where Isis stands behind a figure of the deceased as Osiris and rests her hands upon him (ibid.; Bruyère 1928, 85 fig. 58; see left). This positioning places supporters in what Hall termed the close phase of ‘intimate distance’, often associated with physical and emotional intimacy, trust and support, and so on (Hall 1990<sup>2</sup>, 117–9).

### Collective agent or recipient



A goddess appears in a group of three or more deities either engaging in the same activity or communally receiving worship. For example, a fragment from Room II of the tomb of Mose carries a scene showing the deceased

worshipping before seven divine cows and a bull (PM III:2<sup>2</sup>, 554; Gaballa 1977, pl. 20; see left). This is the vignette to BD Spell 148 which appeals to the seven cows, the ‘Bull of the *Duat*’, and the four rudders of the sky (Navelle 1886, I, pl. 167).

## 1.6. The Structure of the Thesis

The following discussions have been structured according to the proposed typology for characterising the roles and agencies of goddesses in two-dimensional compositions. This was done in conjunction with other considerations, such as the specificities of the material under examination, and broader trends that might be applicable to several of the categories within the typology. As a result, the chapters of the thesis are arranged according to the broad compositional settings of goddess figures, in which the roles of the typology can be assumed. Namely: where goddess figures are depicted alone, as individual agents or recipients (Chapters 2 and 3); where they appear as part of a pair, as either co-agents, counterparts, or supporters (Chapter 4); where they appear in group contexts, as collective agents or recipients (Chapter 5).

Chapter 2 examines how goddesses’ individual agency is represented and utilised in tomb contexts. Individual agents in funerary settings have been treated separately to their contemporaries in temples, due to different ritual foci of those spaces, which have

consequences for the ways in which goddesses inhabit this role. Chapter 2 begins by outlining patterns in the attestation of individual agency within the Theban and Memphite data sets, as well as indicating the specific goddesses who are most frequently depicted as individual agents. Two case studies are then provided. The first, taken from the tomb of Paser (TT 106) at Sheikh Abd el-Qurna (see §2.3), considers an example of an individual agent from outside of the usual group, and how that goddess— and perhaps others like her— might exhibit fluidity and multiplicity. The second case study, taken from the tomb of Sennedjem (TT 1) at Deir el-Medina, considers whether or not goddesses' modes of individual agency are the same as those of gods, or whether there are instances where female deities exercise their agency in ways particular to their female nature. To consider this question, the case study centres around a scene in the short entrance passageway of TT 1's burial chamber, in which a goddess appears to facilitate the movement of the deceased through the bodily metaphor of birth.

Chapter 3 looks to individual agency in temple environments, firstly in the second hypostyle hall of Seti I's Abydos temple, and then in the Small Temple at Abu Simbel. In so doing, the chapter considers how the depiction and deployment of goddesses' individual agency in these contexts might intersect with both the functions and priorities of a particular temple, as well as with wider concerns of decorum and fundamental ideas of primacy and prominence within temple spaces. Central questions regarding hierarchy and status emerge from these discussions; it will be shown that goddesses' individual agency is widely allotted a secondary status comparative to that of gods, and that techniques of spatial organisation can be used to maintain that position or to mediate tensions where goddesses are more prominent. However, it is also suggested that this secondary status might provide opportunity for goddesses to exercise modes of agency that are not accessible to gods.

Chapter 4 considers the roles that goddesses occupy within pairs— kin and non-kin co-agents, counterparts, and supporters— and how their agency might function within those pairings, even when they are depicted in secondary or less active positions. Firstly, an outline is given of the broad kinds of relationships that can be expressed through pairing; those that express kinship, thematic bonds, or the entwined identities of the figures. Different compositional nuances and dynamics are then proposed for the ‘pairing roles’ that construct these relationships, and patterns in their use are inferred from attestations across the study’s data sets. Following and informed by these analyses, three case studies are used as examples of the broad kinds of relationship that are expressed through the pairing roles. The case studies are taken from Seti’s temple at Abydos (focusing on the chapel of Isis), the stelae of Ramose, and the tomb of Nakhtamun (TT 335) at Deir el-Medina. These case studies demonstrate some of the forms and functions of pairing, and further the interrogation of gendered status and hierarchy.

Chapter 5 concerns collective agents and recipients, whose setting within groups places their compositional presence at a communal level. Once more, the attestations of the role in the tomb and temple data sets are described statistically, and the arrangements of groups in tomb and temple decoration are subjected to structural analyses. The findings of this chapter stand as a counterpoint to those of Chapter 4; the secondary status of goddesses and their agency in group contexts are almost intrinsic, to the point that multi-gender groups seem to be largely avoided in the temple environments that centre female deities. While the structures of female secondariness appear to be deeply foundational within group contexts, a possible exception is presented in the form of a genre of stelae, namely the triadic stelae of Qadesh. This final case study— centring on one of the stelae of Ramose— is used to explore the pervasiveness of structural hierarchies of gender within groups. Although Qadesh’s central and dominant position does indeed seem highly

unusual, even exceptional, elements of her depiction in the Ramose example and others suggest that a secondary position for goddesses within groups was part of the visual vocabulary of Egyptian two-dimensional art.

Chapter 6 marks the conclusion to this study. After summarising the discussions of the preceding chapters, the study's quantitative methods are reviewed, outlining the insights they have provided as well as the limitations of their use. Following this, the issue of hierarchy and secondary status is once more considered; the analyses of the thesis support the interpretation that goddesses are widely placed into secondary positions, or have their prominence mediated against the primacy of gods. However, the presented case studies also contain instances in which goddesses appear to act, or be depicted, in ways that gods cannot. It will therefore be argued that secondary the status of goddesses might afford representational opportunities, and even allow female deities to develop and exercise their own forms of agency.

## 2. Individual Agents or Recipients in Private Tombs

### 2.1. Introduction to Chapter 2

Given the lack of a systematic analysis of Egyptian goddesses as a category and their gendered agency, one might expect female deities to most frequently appear in tombs as counterparts to gods. After all, depictions of Isis and Osiris are perhaps some of the first images to come to mind when recalling goddesses in funerary spaces. In fact, as outlined in this chapter, one of the most consistently attested means of representing female deities in tomb decoration is acting or receiving worship alone. A series of questions arise from this observation: are goddesses afforded individual agency as often as gods, and is that agency equally prominent? Is the individual agency of a female deity qualitatively different to one of her male contemporaries? The following discussions begin the interrogation of these questions.

To begin, patterns of attestation for individual agents in Theban and Memphite private tombs are outlined (§2.2), and an overview given of the goddesses who most commonly appear as individual agents or recipients. Having presented these broader trends, detailed analysis is made of two case studies, both of which nuance understandings of goddesses who are depicted alone. The first is taken from the tomb of the vizier Paser at Sheikh Abd el-Qurna (TT 106: §2.3), and uses the interrelating compositions on a pillar in the tomb's broad hall to consider the multiplicity and fluidity that is possible for goddesses who occupy this role. The form and identifications of the singular goddess figure who appears in the pillar's scene, and her relationships with other goddesses named in a ritual text below, suggest that multiple associations are present in and through her, something that the tomb owner appears to utilise as a vehicle for his self-presentation.

The second case study examines a depiction of Nut on the ceiling of a short entrance passageway into the burial chamber of Sennedjem at Deir el-Medina (TT 1: §2.4). The case study considers whether individual agency among goddesses is functionally the same as that of gods, or if— even in rare instances— female deities might have functions and modes of agency that are particular to them. It is shown that the image of Nut in TT 1 participates in a network of solar iconography that facilitates the deceased’s transition in and out of the tomb, to which Nut contributes through the metaphor of birth. This would indeed appear to be a case of a goddess exhibiting modes of agency that are grounded in conceptions of her female nature, and it is suggested that some other depictions of Nut from Deir el-Medina might function in similar ways.

## 2.2. The Usual Suspects: Individual Agents in Private Tomb Decoration

Across the Theban sample, individual agents constitute a median average of 29% of a tomb’s goddess figures, and a mean average of 30% (see Chart 1). The two averages are close to one another, indicating a very even distribution, suggesting that these statistics indicate a consistent trend within the data. Similarly, in the Memphite tomb sample individual agents make up a median average of 33% of the images of goddesses in a tomb, and a mean average of 29% (see Chart 2), another relatively even distribution. Looking to attestations of other roles in these same data sets, which are examined in detail in subsequent chapters, individual agents are on average the most-represented group within Theban tomb decoration, the second most consistently attested category being supporters (see Chart 1; §4.2.2). Individual agents are similarly prominent in Memphite decoration, since both individual agents and counterparts each make up around a third of a tomb’s goddess figures (see Chart 2; §4.2.2).

However, it should be noted that while individual agents are one of the most frequently occurring categories, the prominence of such agency within the totality of a tomb's divine figures may be lessened by the relatively low numbers of goddess figures comparative to gods. A median average of 25% of divine figures in a Theban tomb are female, and a mean average of 28% (see Chart 3). A similar situation is observable in the Memphite sample, where both the median and mean averages for the proportion of goddesses among a tomb's divine figures is 27% (ibid.). Individual agents might be a significant demographic of the wider population of goddesses in tomb decoration, yet it is not a very large population to begin with.

The goddesses who regularly appear as individual agents in tomb decoration form a relatively discrete group. Its members are the Tree Goddess, the Goddess of the West, Hathor, Nut, Maat, Taweret, and Ammut. The recurrence of these deities can be attributed to several factors, a significant one being the popular use of motifs from the *Book of the Dead* in which they feature. One such scene is the vignette of BD Spell 186 (Neville 1886, I, pl. 212), which depicts Hathor as a cow emerging from thickets at the base of the western mountain, sometimes with Taweret standing at the foot of the mountain's slopes and facing towards the deceased who worships in front of the two goddesses. Another commonly depicted motif shows the Tree Goddess dispensing rejuvenating water to the tomb owner, a vignette that accompanies some versions of BD Spells 59–63A (Neville 1886, I, pl. 71–3; Billing 2004, 44). Variants of the scene appear throughout the Theban necropolis, with one attestation appearing in the case study tomb of Paser, where the Tree Goddess dispenses water to the tomb owner's *ba* on the east wall of the broad hall (PM I:1<sup>2</sup>, 222; MMA Photo T. 2917). The scene is also attested among material from the tombs of the Memphite sample, namely the chapels of Hormin (PM III:2<sup>2</sup>, 665; Reinisch 1865,

238 fig. 29), Sayempeteref (PM III:2<sup>2</sup>, 716; Keimer 1929, pl. 1), and two fragments from the tomb of Niay (Hannover 2933: Cramer 1936, pl. 7).

While the goddesses listed above are frequently depicted as individual agents or recipients in both Theban and Memphite private tombs, the forms these deities take can vary according to local traditions. For example, in Memphite material, Hathor frequently appears with the epithet ‘Hathor of the Southern Sycamore’, such as on fragments from the tomb of Mose where images of this form of the goddess appear on both the interior and exterior sides of the doorway into Room I (PM III:2<sup>2</sup>, 554; see Gaballa 1977, pl. 3, 7). Hathor of the Southern Sycamore is local to the Memphite area; she had a small temple located at Kom el-Rabia near Mit Rahina, dating to the reign of Ramesses II (PM III:2<sup>2</sup>, 852–4), and Kitchen theorised that her main temple was likely located some two miles or more south of the great Ptah precinct (Kitchen 1991, 92), based on a passage in P. Harris I which states that Ptah would sail on his barge to visit Hathor of the Southern Sycamore in the south of Memphis (Erichsen 1933, 49.2–3). As well as holding a locally based epithet, Hathor’s image can also be rendered in a way that perhaps has more of an association with the Memphite area, at least in the context of private tomb decoration. In Theban material, Hathor is commonly shown either as fully anthropomorphic or fully bovine (see Bleeker 1973, 22–4). At Memphis too, the goddess appears in fully bovine form, as on the north wall of the south chapel in the tomb chapel of Khay (Martin et al. 2001, pl. 11), yet here she can also be depicted as a woman with a cow’s head. She assumes this manifestation in the interior of the north side of the façade into Mose’s Room I, the south wall of the tomb of Raia (Martin 1985, pl. 22), and on a lintel from a tomb not included in the Memphite sample, that of Ramesesemperra (PM III:2<sup>2</sup>, 715; Berlandini-Grenier 1974, pl. 3). Therefore, while the goddesses depicted as individual agents in tomb decoration tend to be drawn from a defined group, the ways in which that group’s members are represented can

vary to incorporate local associations and traditions. The following case study, however, focuses on an unusual exception.

### 2.3. The Lady of the Sky, the Uraeus, the Eye of Ra: The Multiplicity of the Pillar H Goddess in the Tomb of Paser (TT 106) at Sheikh Abd el-Qurna

#### 2.3.1. A Goddess in Context: The Tomb of Paser and the Pillar H Figure

TT 106 (PM I:1<sup>2</sup>, 219–24) is located in the lower enclosure at the northern end of Sheikh Abd el-Qurna. The monument shares a forecourt with the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty tomb of Nefersekeru to the north (TT 107: PM I:1<sup>2</sup>, 224–5), and with the 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty tomb of Khaemopet in the south (TT 105: PM I:1<sup>2</sup>, 218–9). TT 106 belongs to the vizier Paser, who was active during the reigns of Seti I and Ramesses II (Donohue 1988, 106–7; Hofmann 2004, 31). The monument is recorded, in addition to its entry in the *Topographical Bibliography*, in Friederike Kampp-Seyfried's catalogue and classification of Theban tombs (Kampp 1966, 382–5), and is described in Eva Hofmann's study of Ramessid private tomb decoration (Hofmann 2004, 31–9), however there is no full publication of the tomb at present (a monograph by Assmann, Hofmann, Kampp-Seyfried, and Seyfried is in preparation). Some of the tomb's texts have been transcribed or translated (*KRI* I, 285–301; III, 1–9; Schiaparelli 1890, II, 297–8; Assmann 1999<sup>2</sup>, 241–4; 2005, 459–78; Froid 2007, 148–56), yet the decorative programme has been little discussed beyond Hofmann's stylistic assessment, a circumstance that likely results from the absence of a systematic publication. However, much of TT 106 was photographed by the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Egyptian Expedition. The original photographs were taken between the 1900s and 1940s, and copies were acquired by the Griffith Institute some time before 1955 (PM I:1<sup>2</sup>, xviii; see Griffith Institute Archive: Collection MMA

MSS). The Griffith Institute versions of the images, included here with kind permission of the Metropolitan Museum, are what brought the tomb and the Pillar H example to the attention of the author during the course of archival research, and it is with this partial yet functional record that the following analyses were conducted.

The rock-cut tomb chapel of TT 106 conforms to the T-shaped plan typical of Theban tombs from the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty onwards (see Plan 2). It can be categorised as Type VIIc in Kampp's classifications, comprising a broad hall containing a single row of pillars, followed a long hall with two rows of pillars, and terminating in a statue niche (1966, 31–2, 382–5). The broad hall is extensively decorated in fine raised relief, something uncommon among Theban tombs yet not unknown, as the contemporaneous tombs of Nebwenenef at Dra Abu el-Naga (TT 157: PM I:1<sup>2</sup>, 266–8) and of Nebsumenu at el-Khokha (TT 183: PM I:1<sup>2</sup>, 289–90) are also decorated in this way. Of the hall's eight inscribed pillars, five (B, E, F, G, and H: PM I:1<sup>2</sup>, 222–4) have faces that carry a scene in their upper sections, with an extended text beneath arranged into horizontal lines (MMA Photos T2937–65). Three of these surfaces— on pillars B, G, and H— occupy the eastern side that faces the entrance of the broad hall, and are immediately visible to someone visiting the tomb chapel. The scene on Pillar G has been lost, yet those on pillars B and H each depict Paser offering before a seated deity; on Pillar B he worships a deified Seti I (PM I:1<sup>2</sup>, 223; MMA Photo T2937), while on Pillar H he offers incense to a lioness-headed goddess (PM I:1<sup>2</sup>, 224; MMA Photo T2957; see Fig. 7).

The Pillar H scene is executed in the same raised relief as most of the decoration in the broad hall. It depicts Paser as a priest, with a shaven head and wearing a leopard skin over his long tunic. In his left hand he holds an incense burner, while with his right he pours libations over a pile of offerings stacked on a stand. He faces towards a raised shrine, within which sits the Pillar H goddess. She is depicted as a lioness-headed woman,

crowned by a sun disk and wearing a sheath dress. In her right hand she holds a papyrus staff, while in her left she clasps an *ankh*. A colour photograph generously shared with the author by Eva Hofmann shows that the relief work of both scene and text are also painted using white, yellow, red, and blue pigments. There is a negative space in front of the seated goddess that was presumably intended to contain a caption that was never carved, yet there is a caption above the figure of Paser that describes his offering (see §2.3.4), in which the goddess is given the primary identification of Meretseger, and is also named as Weret-Hekau, Sekhmet, Neseret, and Hetepet (*KRI I*, 301.10; see §2.3.4, l. 1–2).

### 2.3.2. A Scene of One's Own: The Pillar H Goddess as Individual Recipient

The Pillar H goddess is one of four female deities shown as individual agents or recipients of worship (17% of the 24 observable goddess figures; see Table 1; Chart 4). The proportion of goddess figures occupying the role stands in contrast to the rest of the Theban sample, in which individual agents are, on average, one of the most attested categories in tomb programmes (see Chart 1).

Yet the unusual nature of the Pillar H goddess does not simply extend to demographics. As noted above, she is named as Meretseger, and is also identified as Weret-Hekau and so on. All of these divinities are outside of the pool of deities from which Theban tomb decoration tends to draw its individual agents and recipients. The other three individual agents in TT 106 are taken from this group, such as on the east wall of the broad hall where the Tree Goddess appears dispensing water to the *ba* of the deceased (PM I:1<sup>2</sup>, 222; MMA Photo T2917), and on Pillar A that depicts Hathor in her anthropomorphic manifestation, emerging from the western mountain to greet the wizened Paser with the welcoming *nyny* gesture (PM I:1<sup>2</sup>, 222; MMA Photo T2933; for *nyny* see

Dominicus 1994, 38–44 and Westendorf 1991). The very identity of the Pillar H goddess makes her an outlier.

She is also distinguished from the other members of her category by her prominent position within the decorative programme. As noted in the description of Pillar H's setting within the tomb, the goddess appears on one of five surfaces whose decoration includes an upper scene with an extended inscription beneath, and hers is one of just three from that group which face the entrance of the broad hall, and are thus immediately visible to a visitor. Meanwhile, the other individual agents within the tomb do not occupy such prominent positions. The aforementioned depictions of the Tree Goddess on the east wall and of Hathor on Pillar A both share their surfaces with other scenes and deities, and furthermore are positioned on the lower of two registers (PM I:1<sup>2</sup>, 222; MMA Photo T2917, T2933). In her analysis of compositional dominance in two-dimensional art, Robins notes that lower registers of compositions are less prestigious than those above (1994, 36), a mechanism of vertical hierarchy that is central to the analysis of collective agents in the fifth chapter of this study (see §5.3.1). The other goddesses who are depicted with individual agency are therefore less prominent than the Pillar H goddess, whose presence dominates her scene and who is the most prestigious figure on her surface. Finally, she is also distinct from the other members of her category because she is the only goddess in the hall that is depicted as the sole object of worship. The other female divinities in the space are shown engaged in action, such as Hathor welcoming Paser into the necropolis or the Tree Goddess dispensing water. Therefore, the goddess on Pillar H is once again distinguished from her contemporaries in the broad hall, as she is the only female deity to be shown as an individual *recipient*.

### 2.3.3. Meretseger By Any Other Name? The Identity of the Pillar H Figure

The unusual nature of the Pillar H goddess deepens the closer one looks at her. Unlike the other goddess figures in the tomb, for whom captions and iconography are in alignment, there is a dissonance between how the deity on Pillar H is named and how she looks.

The figure is named as Meretseger, a deity whose importance to the communities of the Theban west bank has been widely discussed, particularly in reference to material from Deir el-Medina (e.g. Bruyère 1930). The figure is given other identifications, and so might be understood as a syncretisation of the five deities listed in the scene's caption, yet to follow Hornung's understanding of syncretism (1982, 98), the placement of Meretseger's name at the beginning of the sequence would mark her as the dominant persona within a temporary co-habitation of a single figure by multiple beings. However, while the caption presents Meretseger as the prism through which the other deities are viewed, it is extremely rare for that goddess to be depicted as a woman with a lion's head, perhaps even unparalleled. She is most frequently represented as a serpent, as a human with a snake's head, or as a snake with human features (Valbelle 1982, 80). She is occasionally shown as a sphinx with a snake's head, for example on a late 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty stela in the Vatican Museum (n° 170; Bruyère 1930, 115 fig. 55) and in a rock graffito to the north-east of Deir el-Medina (Rzepka 2014, 269 n° 1082'a'), yet these do not constitute a full parallel.

Furthermore, while one might cite the Turin stela of Neferabu as a textual parallel (Museo Egizio 50058, Cat. 1593; *KRI* III, 772–3; Museo Egizio 2015, 124–5 n° 137; Bruyère 1930, 205–7), to do so would likely draw a false equivalence. In describing his punishment and subsequent forgiveness by Meretseger, Neferabu warns 'Look, I will say to the great and the small who are among the workforce; beware of the Peak, for a lion is within it' (*KRI* III, 773.2–3). *T3 dhnt*/the Peak is a designation that is attested in other

regions (e.g. el-Hiba, Kafr-Ammar, and Saqqara), and can also refer to Hathor (Leitz 2002, VII, 565–6). Here and in other material it does appear to refer to Meretseger, likely identifying her with the desert escarpment that embraced many of the sites of western Thebes (see Yoyotte 2003, 289–94). Neferabu’s stela may initially appear to support a leonine manifestation for Meretseger, yet given the dearth of depictions, and the tone and content of the stela itself, the reference to a lion in the Peak is likely a metaphor for Meretseger’s ferocity. The form of the Pillar H goddess remains unparalleled within Meretseger’s iconography.

However, a leonine form is not unusual for the goddess listed as the secondary identification of the Pillar H figure; Weret-Hekau. Unlike Meretseger, she is depicted as a woman with a lion’s head in several monuments that are contemporary with TT 106. She appears in three offering scenes in the Great Hypostyle Hall at Karnak, twice with Seti I (PM II<sup>2</sup>, 45; Nelson 1981, pl. 191–2) and once with Ramesses II (PM II<sup>2</sup>, 46; Nelson 1981, pl. 12), on each occasion as a lioness-headed figure. In the Seti scenes she is crowned by a solar disk, like the figure in the TT 106 scene whose caption also mentions Seti. Additionally, Weret-Hekau is named as a subsidiary identification of a figure of Sekhmet in the second hypostyle hall of Seti’s Abydos temple (PM VI, 7; Calverley et al. 1958, pl. 44), an image which will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter on individual agency in temple decoration (see §3.2.4). Therefore, the form of a lioness-headed woman is not only well-attested for Weret-Hekau, but appears to have a particularly strong association with the goddess in major monuments from the reign of Seti I. As the tomb of the southern vizier who came to power under Seti, and who would therefore have had an active involvement in the production of these monuments, TT 106 can be counted among their number.

It should be noted that Weret-Hekau can also be depicted as a snake or with snakelike features, a form that would have aligned with the standard iconography of Meretseger as the primary identification of the Pillar H figure. She appears in full snake form or as a serpent-headed woman in numerous Ramessid sources, some of the most recent work on which has been done by Ahmed M. Mekawy Ouda. The votive stela of Penneferu from Deir el-Medina (BM EA 812) shows her as a cobra (Bierbrier 1993, pl. 52–3; Mekawy Ouda 2018), while on the votive stela of Penamun (Bristol Museum H 514) she is rendered as a woman with a serpent’s head (Mekawy Ouda 2015, 79). She also appears in her serpent-headed form in the wall scenes of Ramesses III at Karnak (PM II<sup>2</sup>, 175; Mekawy Ouda 2015, 81 fig. 4), and at Medinet Habu (Epigraphic Survey 1964, pl. 578.A; Mekawy Ouda 2015, 80 fig. 3). Weret-Hekau’s serpentine aspect, as will be further explored through the examination of the Pillar H ritual text (see §2.3.4–5), is tied up in her association with the uraeus (Nebe 1986, 1221–4). Her role as a uraeus goddess, and her subsequent serpentine aspect, is attested elsewhere in TT 106, since the biographies on Pillars B and G both describe the accession of their respective kings by stating that ‘...his (the king’s) mother Maat (is) the protection of his body, having appeared as Weret-Hekau, (taking) her place between his eyebrows, as the coiled one upon his head’ (*KRI* I, 299.5–6; III, 9.5–6; translation: Frood 2007, 150, 152). By depicting the Pillar H goddess as a leonine figure, rather than as a snake which would have been appropriate for both Meretseger and Weret-Hekau, the artists appear to have created an intentional dissonance in the image of the goddess, one that may evoke the presence of Weret-Hekau within the figure.

#### 2.3.4. The Ritual Text

The resonances and dissonances within the Pillar H figure interrelate with, and are contextualised by, the ritual text that accompanies the scene. The text describes an incense offering to the uraeus goddess, who is addressed using various names and epithets, principal among which are Weret-Hekau, Sekhmet, Wadjet, and Neseret (see 1. 2 of ritual text below). The composition itself is known from two ritual sequences, the Opening of the Mouth ceremony and the daily temple ritual (see Moret 1902; Lorton 1999; David 2016). The text is numbered as scene 59B in Eberhard Otto's edition of the Opening of the Mouth (1960, I, 150–4; II, 132–4), a numbering which is used in the following analyses to refer to the composition as part of funerary ritual. In order to distinguish where the text is being discussed as part of the daily temple ritual, and for ease of reference, Rosalie David's sequencing of the daily ritual has been used, in which this composition is numbered as episode 5 (2016, 137).

Looking to the Ramessid period specifically, the composition observably had a simultaneous existence in funerary and temple contexts of that time. One of the versions of scene 59B on which Otto drew for his edition is found in the tomb of Seti I (KV 17: PM I:2<sup>2</sup>, 540; Otto 1960, II, 173 n° 2). As vizier, Paser would have had knowledge of and likely involvement in the production of that monument, a prospect made more suggestive by orthographic similarities between the Seti version and the Pillar H text (see notes below). Meanwhile, contemporaneous with both KV 17 and TT 106, episode 5 is attested in six of the seven chapels in the temple of Seti I at Abydos (all apart from the chapel of Seti himself: PM VI, 12–8; Calverley et al. 1933, pl. 4, 18, 26; 1935, pl. 4, 14, 22). Alexandre Moret's treatment of the daily temple service (1902, 233–4) presents episode 5 as an additional part of the ritual that is particular to Abydos, an interpretation echoed by David (2016, 372 n. 19). However, the episode is also attested the temple of Luxor, where

it occurs in an offering scene within the Mut chamber of Ramesses II's barque shrine (PM II<sup>2</sup>, 309; Daressy 1894, 53), and is also included in a depiction of the daily ritual in the temple of Ramesses III at Medinet Habu, on the north colonnade of the first court (PM II<sup>2</sup>, 494; Epigraphic Survey 1940, pl. 241.a). Significantly for the discussion of the Pillar H ritual text in relation to the goddess figure above it, the Medinet Habu version of episode 5 is also accompanied by a leonine figure, labelled as Sekhmet-Bastet-Weret-Hekau (PM II<sup>2</sup>, 494; Epigraphic Survey 1940, pl. 241a). Therefore, the Pillar H ritual text is a composition which had multiple lives and associations at the time of its inscription, having an established presence in both the funerary and temple spheres. It will be shown that such multiplicities, visible within the text itself through the overlapping identities of the invoked goddesses, are utilised alongside the goddess figure of the scene above, and add dimension to its dissonance.

Before presenting the Pillar H text, a few remarks are appropriate regarding previous scholarly engagements with the text, and the scope of the following treatment. A partial transcription of the Pillar H text was published in Ernesto Schiaparelli's *Il Libro dei Funerali* (1890, II, 297–8). Schiaparelli's copy does not include the dedicatory section at the end of the inscription. Otto presents the Pillar H text as a variant version of scene 59B (1960, I, 150–4 Varr 58; II, 180), yet since he used Schiaparelli's transcription to do so (*ibid.*), he also omits the final section of the text. Therefore, since no complete copy of the Pillar H text has been published, and the Schiaparelli transcription contains orthographic errors that are preserved in Otto's edition (see notes below), an original transcription (see Fig. 9), transliteration, and translation are provided here. The translation largely adheres to Otto's translation of scene 59B (1960, II, 132), yet departures from it are indicated. The caption of the accompanying scene has already been published by Kitchen (*KRI* I, 301), yet has been included to allow a cohesive analysis of the pillar's compositions. However,

what follows is not a full edition of the text, nor is it a comprehensive philological analysis. Instead, it is an attempt to contextualise the Pillar H goddess by observing the relationships between the goddesses named in the text, and how the scene above might visualise or participate in those relationships. The extent and content of the commentary notes reflect this aim, as well as providing clarification on readings.

### *Caption of the Scene*

- (1) *irt sntr n Mrt:s-gr n Wrt-hk3w*
- (2) *hrt-tp m pr-ns[r] Shmt sp 2<sup>[1]</sup> Nsrt sp 2 Htpyt sp 2*
- (3) *hw.tw nswt Mn-M3<sup>c</sup>t-R<sup>c</sup>[2] m nh dd w3s nb*
- (4) *in iry-p<sup>c</sup>t h3ty-<sup>c</sup> s3b n W3dty hm-ntr tpy n*
- (5) *Wrt-hk3w imy-r3 niwt t3ty P3-sr m3<sup>c</sup>-hrw*

- (1) Making an incense offering to Meretseger, to Weret-Hekau,
- (2) utmost in the Per-Nes[er], Sekhmet the powerful, Neseret the fiery, and Hetepet the gracious,
- (3) so that the king Menmaatra may be endowed with all life, stability, and power,
- (4) by the patrician, the count, the dignitary of the two Wadjets, the high priest of Weret-Hekau, the overseer of the city, the vizier, Paser, the justified.

### *Notes*

- [1] Otto has been followed in translating *Shmt sp 2* as *Shmt shmt*, ‘Sekhmet the powerful’ (1960, II, 132). *Nsrt sp 2* and *Htpyt sp 2* have been similarly rendered.

[2] In the caption, Paser makes his offering in the name of Seti I (Menmaatra), yet in the ritual text the benefit is dedicated to Ramesses II (see l. 8 below). This discrepancy could suggest that the scene and ritual text were inscribed at different times. However, since Paser was active in the reigns of both these kings, and pillars B and G are inscribed with near identical biographical texts that feature Seti I and Ramesses II respectively (see §2.3.3), the naming of two different kings might also be interpreted as an intentional parallelism reflecting Paser's career trajectory.

#### *Ritual Text*

(1) *irt sntr n nbt pt<sup>[1]</sup> n (i)rt<sup>[2]</sup> n irt R<sup>[3]</sup> dd mdw sp 3 b(w)<sup>[4]</sup>(:i)<sup>[5]</sup> b(w):t{i}<sup>[6]</sup> sntr:t{i}*

*Wrt-hk3w*

(2) *W3dy[t] nb(t) pr wr hnwt pr nsr Shmt Nsrt<sup>[7]</sup> W3dyt P Dp Wnwt Mnhyt niwt*

(3) *š-st Hwt-wrt<sup>[8]</sup> Rsnt Mhnt nbt Sšnt nbt [H3bs] nbt Htp(t)<sup>[9]</sup> t3y(t)-W3d[yt<sup>[10]</sup>*

(4) *hkn[...]:f hr (i)t:s b(w):t{i} b(w) mi{nb}(st)<sup>[11]</sup> dm(i)<sup>[12]</sup>.n<sup>[13]</sup> mis{bi}(t) shd pt b:t{i}*

*b h3bt{i}<sup>[14]</sup> dmi*

(5) *.n<sup>[15]</sup> h3bt{i} shd pt b:k Hr sntr:k šwty<sup>[16]</sup> b:tn ntrw-t3yw<sup>[17]</sup> sntr:tn*

(6) *ntrwt-hmwt stp:tn s3:tn<sup>[18]</sup> hr Wrt-hk3w Shmt sp 2 Nsrt [sp 2 Htpyt<sup>[19]</sup>*

(7) *shtp.ti ntr nb ntrt nb(t) wy:sn mh mrwt:t{i} htp hr:t{i} nfr n*

(8) *nswt bity nb t3wy nb ir(t) ht Wsr-M3<sup>c</sup>t-R<sup>c</sup> Stp-n-R<sup>c</sup> s3 R<sup>c</sup> nb h<sup>c</sup>w R<sup>c</sup>-mss Mry-Imn di nh*

*nfr [m...]*

(9) *in Wsir iry-p<sup>c</sup>t h3ty-<sup>c</sup> htmw [...] bity imy-r3<sup>c</sup> m pr nswt h3wty n sr(w) w3st m h*

*dd.tw.n:fnty m [...]*

(10) *imnwt r:f mh nhwy n hr m m<sup>c</sup>3t hry -tw hr prw n r:f s3b h3y(t) [r r ...]*

(11) *imy-r3 imyw hnr n nb t3wy hm-ntr tpy n Wrt-hk3w [...] t3w hw hr imnt nswt imy-r3*

*niwt t3ty P3-sr ms [Mryt-R<sup>c</sup>]*

- (1) Making an incense offering to the Lady of the Sky, to the Uraeus, and to the Eye of Ra.  
To be spoken three times: (My) purification is your purification. May you be censured, o  
Weret-Hekau;
- (2) Wadjet, Lady of the Per-Wer, Mistress of the Per-Neser; Sekhmet; Neseret; Wadjet of  
Pe and Dep; Wenut; Menhyt of the region
- (3) of her lake; the one of Hut-Weret; the one of Resnet and Mehnet; the Lady of Seshenet;  
the Lady of [Khabes]; the Lady of Hetep(et); Tay(t)-Wadj[et]
- (4) who is acclaimed before her father. You are pure, the *miset*-crest is pure, the *miset*-  
crest cuts the height of the sky. You are pure, the *khabet*-curl is pure,
- (5) the *khabet*-curl touches the height of the sky. You are pure, Horus. You are censured,  
Seth. You are pure, gods. You are censured,
- (6) goddesses. May you protect Weret-Hekau, Sekhmet the powerful, Neseret [the fiery,  
and Hetepet the gracious].
- (7) Every god and every goddess will satisfy you, their arms being filled (with) what you  
love. May your perfect face be gracious to
- (8) the Dual King, the Lord of the Two Lands, the Ritual Lord, Usermaatira Setepenra, the  
Son of Ra, the Lord of Appearances, Ramesses Meryamun, given life, the perfect one in  
[...].
- (9) By the Osiris, the patrician, the count, the seal bearer of the king, the regional overseer  
in the palace, the foremost of the official(s) of Thebes in the palace, he to whom what is in  
[...] is said [...]
- (10) secrets, the true ears of Horus who attends to what comes out of his mouth, the  
dignitary of the altar [...]

(11) the overseer of those who are in the chamber of the Lord of the Two Lands, the high priest of Weret-Hekau, the fanbearer on the king's right side, the overseer of the city, the vizier, Paser, born of [Merytra].

#### Notes

[1] The epithet *nbt pt* is associated with a wide range of goddesses, the attested Ramessid examples who also occur in this text being Menhyt, Sekhmet, Wadjet, and Weret-Hekau (Leitz 2002, IV, 49–50).

[2] *(i)ꜥrt*, literally ‘cobra’, can be used as a generic term for the uraeus. Leitz cites TT 106 as the only occurrence of the term in association with Weret-Hekau (2002, I, 140–1), yet it also appears immediately preceding ‘Weret-Hekau, hidden of forms’ in a list of deities and epithets within a hymn to Amun-Ra-Horakhty in the 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> Dynasty Harris Magical Papyrus (BM EA 10042: Leitz 1999, pl. 15.2–3). The proximity of *(i)ꜥrt* and Weret-Hekau in the list may suggest an association between them.

[3] The epithet *irt (n) Rꜥ* is also a widely attested one. The goddesses who bear this title in Ramessid sources, and are also named in Pillar H's ritual text and its scene's caption, are Menhyt, Meretseger, Neneret, Wadjet, and Sekhmet (Leitz 2002, I, 426–29).

[4] Read as *ꜥb(w)* (TLA lemma-no. 36740), a noun deriving from the verb *ꜥb* (to purify: TLA lemma-no. 36310). This is suggested by the surrounding sentence which appears to feature *ꜥb(w)* as a nominal predicate (see Gardiner 1957<sup>3</sup>, §125–7).

[5] The first-person suffix pronoun is inferred here since  $\text{b}(w)$  is repeated, something which does not occur elsewhere in the text and is unusual for the composition more broadly; no other examples of scene 59B cited by Otto begin in this way (1960, I, 150.a). Similarly, episode 5 of the daily temple ritual opens with a single  $\text{b}(w):t$ , for instance on the north wall of the chapel of Ra-Horakhty in Seti's Abydos temple (PM VI, 12; Calverley et al. 1935, pl. 14). This reading is supported by similar repetitions and parallelisms in other purification texts, for example where Horus and Seth are depicted purifying Seti I on the west wall of the Great Hypostyle Hall at Karnak (PM II<sup>2</sup>, 44), and are quoted as saying  $\text{b}(w):k \text{ b}(w):i \text{ b}(w):i \text{ b}(w):k$ , 'your purification is my purification, and my purification is your purification' (PM II<sup>2</sup>, 44; Nelson 1981, pl. 148 col. 5, 10).

[6] While this ending is written with Gardiner Sign List U33, and thus looks to be the stative ending  $ti$ , both context in the sentence and comparison with the contemporary version of scene 59B in KV 17 (Otto 1960, I, 152.g n° 2) indicate that it should instead be read as the feminine second person singular  $t$ .

[7] *Nsrt*, 'the Fiery One' (TLA lemma-no. 88300, 88310), is a designation of the uraeus goddess, and can also be an epithet of Hathor and Hetepes-Khues (Leitz 2002, IV, 353–4). Versions of scene 59B and episode 5 appear to be the only Ramessid attestations of *Nsrt* occurring in association with Sekhmet (Leitz 2002, IV, 354).

[8] Schiaparelli did not restore this break (1890, II, 297), thus Otto does not either (1960, I, 151.d). However, examination of MMA Photo T2957 allows the identification of a bovine figure recumbent upon a shrine (see Fig. 8), which acts as the determinative for 'the one of

Hut-Weret'. The title is associated with Hathor, and is attested from the Old Kingdom to the Graeco-Roman period (Leitz 2002, V, 68– 9).

[9] *Htpt* is a toponym referring to an unknown location. The epithet *nbt Htpt* is associated with several goddesses in the New Kingdom, the one named on Pillar H being Sekhmet (Leitz 2002, III, 111).

[10] The *w3d* sign (Gardiner Sign List M13) is not recorded by Schiaparelli (1890, II, 297) or Otto (1960, I, 152.f), yet is visible in MMA Photo T2957 (see Fig. 8). The break has been repaired to read Tayt-Wadjet, a syncretisation that may draw upon the goddesses' shared association with Buto (el-Saady 1994, 213; Derchain-Urtel 1986, 185).

[11] While the orthography here appears to read *minb*, Otto has been followed in reading the group— and the subsequent group written as *misb*— to be a writing of *mist* (1960, II, 132.g, 133 n. 10). The term refers to the projection at the back of the Red Crown of Lower Egypt (TLA lemma-no. 68500), though Katja Goebis suggests that it might also be associated with the White Crown (2008, 47).

[12] Otto argued that the use of the knife determinative, both here and in the contemporaneous version of the text in KV 17 (1960, I, 152.g n° 2), indicates that *dm(i)* should be read as 'cut' rather than 'touch' (TLA lemma-no. 179320), as it seems to be in other versions (1960, I, 152.g–h). Meanwhile, the occurrence of *dmi* at the end of the same line is not written with the knife determinative, and so has been translated as 'touch'.

[13] Otto translates *dmi* as present tense (1960, II, 132.g–h). However, the group is followed by *n*, something paralleled in the KV 17 version of scene 59B (Otto 1960, I, 152.g n° 2) and in the versions of episode 5 in the chapels of Osiris, Isis, Horus, Ra-Horakhty, and Ptah (Calverley et al. 1933, pl. 4, 18, 26; 1935, pl. 14, 22). Therefore the group has been read here as a *s<sub>d</sub>m.n:f*, with *mist* as its subject.

[14] *h<sub>3</sub>bt* refers to the curled protrusion at the front of the Red Crown (TLA lemma-no. 122470; Goebis 2008, 159–60). There is a possible wordplay here with *H<sub>3</sub>bs* in the preceding line, a toponym likely denoting a location in the Memphite region (Leitz 2002, IV, 114).

[15] The Pillar H text is the only version of scene 59B given by Otto that uses the red crown sign (Gardiner Sign List S3) in order to write *.n* (Otto 1960, I, 152.h). None of the versions of episode 5 at Abydos do so either. While the sign relates to *dmi* at the end of the preceding line, and thus completes the *s<sub>d</sub>m.n:f* form, it is followed by a reference to the *h<sub>3</sub>bt* curl. The use of the red crown hieroglyph might therefore be a scribal play.

[16] Schiaparelli and Otto record the determinative of Seth's name as a seated figure with the head of the Seth animal (Gardiner Sign List C7; Schiaparelli 1890, II, 298; Otto 1960, I, 153.i), yet the MMA photograph clearly shows the standard seated god determinative (Gardiner Sign List A40; see Fig. 8). This has been corrected in the provided transcription (see Fig. 9).

[17] The compound phrases *n<sub>tr</sub>w-t3yw* and *n<sub>tr</sub>wt-hmwt* are attested in all other versions of the composition (both scene 59B and episode 5), as well as in the Ramessid magical

papyrus Leiden I 343 + 345 (Leitz 2002, IV, 552; Massart 1954, 32 vso I.3), and the Karnak stela recording the peace treaty between Ramesses II and the Hittite king (Leitz 2002, IV, 572; *KRI* II, 229.12–3, 230.10). *ntrwt-ḥmwt* appears without its masculine counterpart in BD Spell 79 (Naville 1886, I, pl. 90 P.d.14). The construction of these terms seems analogous to the conjunction *st-ḥmt* to mean ‘woman’ (TLA lemma-no. 125370), and the parallel use of ‘male gods’ and ‘female goddesses’ emphatically communicates a binary gender model, such as that presented by *the Onomasticon of Amenemope* (see §1.1).

[18] *stp:tn s3:tn* was translated as a present tense by Moret (1902, 233) and Otto (1960, II, 132), yet due to its initial position in the sentence it is read here as a prospective *sḏm:f*. Schiaparelli and Otto record the *s3* in the Pillar H text as Gardiner Sign List V17 (Gardiner 1957<sup>3</sup>, 523), yet the MMA photograph shows it to be sign V16 (see Fig. 8), something corrected in the transcription provided (see Fig. 9). The writing of *s3* with V16 is also attested in the KV 17 version of scene 59B (Otto 1960, I, 153.1 n° 2), another orthographic similarity between the two texts.

[19] Restored from parallels given in Otto’s edition of scene 59B (1960, I, 153.1 n° 1, 2, 4, 7).

Several points of analysis emerge from this treatment of the Pillar H ritual text. Firstly, the copy of scene 59B in KV 17 is likely to be the source from which the Pillar H text was drawn, as indicated by several orthographic similarities that are not found in the other versions of the text, namely the writing of the second person feminine *t* with Gardiner Sign List U33 (see n. 6), and the writing of *s3* with V16 (see n. 18). Since it is likely that Paser, as the southern vizier under Seti I, would have had some involvement with the

construction of KV 17, such a source for the Pillar H text is possible, and indeed the observed similarities between the two texts make it probable. The remaining points of interest pertain to the several forms of multiplicity that are observable within the Pillar H version.

The first form of multiplicity exists between the goddesses who are invoked in the recitation. Several of the cited deities participate in one another through shared epithets, something that is particularly prevalent in the title of the spell (see l. 1). Here the incense offering is directed to ‘the Lady of the Sky, to the Uraeus, and to the Eye of Ra’, three broad designations with which many of the listed goddesses can be associated. The epithets ‘Lady of the Sky’ and ‘Eye of Ra’ are particularly wide-reaching, being attributable to most deities named in the text (see n. 1, 3). Furthermore, the ways in which both the goddesses’ names and more general epithets are presented in relation to one another may accentuate their multiplicity, and perhaps a fluidity between them. The title of the spell separates its short list of general designations using the preposition *n/to* (see l. 1). Rather than addressing the ritual ‘to the Lady of the Sky, the Uraeus, the Eye of Ra’— a phrasing which could imply that the designations all apply to a single figure and therefore only to goddesses in the following list that can be connected to all three epithets— the action is instead directed ‘to the Lady of the Sky, to the Uraeus, to the Eye of Ra’. The three designations in the title might therefore be read as umbrella terms, which between them incorporate the entire sequence of deities that follows. Furthermore, the presentation of that sequence of divine names and epithets as continuous and unbroken, with little or no demarcation between the deities listed, serves to deepen the sense of equivalence between these goddesses. As one name flows into the next, so too the boundaries between personalities appear fluid and relational.

The second form of multiplicity observable in the ritual text is a multiplicity of context. The composition had lives in both tomb and temple spheres, and both settings appear to be evoked in the version inscribed on Pillar H. The funerary aspect of the text is evoked by its physical setting in a tomb space, and perhaps by using the KV 17 version of the Opening of the Mouth ceremony as a source. However, the dimension of the text that is embedded in temple ritual is also present in the Pillar H inscription, being evoked in the form and content of the dedicatory section omitted by Schiaparelli and Otto. All other versions of scene 59B presented by Otto conclude with the assertion that the rite is carried out ‘for (the deceased) on this day’ (Otto 1960, I, 154.n n° 1, 2, 4), indicating that the owner of the tomb, coffin, or papyrus is the beneficiary of the ritual. In contrast, the Pillar H text states dedicates the benefit of the ritual to Ramesses II, with Paser’s name and titles eventually being introduced with the preposition *in/by* (see l. 7–11). Paser is presented as a cultic officiant who operates on behalf of the king, resonating strongly with a context of temple ritual. Therefore, displaying interrelations between both the goddesses it lists and the settings with which it is associated, the Pillar H text is a composition of multiplicities.

### 2.3.5. A ‘Palimpsest’ in Stone: The Multiplicity of the Pillar H Goddess as a Vehicle for Self-Presentation

The dynamics identified within the ritual text allow an appreciation of the dimensionality of the Pillar H goddess, and ultimately are indicative of her function, since the multiplicities that are present in both the form and content of the Pillar H text extend into and incorporate the scene above it. To conclude the Paser case study, it will be demonstrated that multiple associations are simultaneously present within the pillar’s compositions— a symbolic palimpsest of layered contexts, personas, and identities— which are utilised through the lens of the depicted goddess in order to facilitate the tomb owner’s

biographical presentation, whilst also embedding Paser and his monument within the local landscape.

The forms of multiplicity identified in the ritual text interrelate with and incorporate the Pillar H scene and its goddess figure. The enshrined deity is given in the primary identification of Meretseger, a goddess whose name does not appear in the list invoked by the ritual text. However, she can be associated with the ‘Eye of Ra’ in other material of this period (see n. 3), a designation that appears in the title of the recitation and is shared by several of the deities whose names do appear. Meretseger is therefore drawn into the group of invoked uraeus deities through the multiplicity and fluidity that exists between these goddesses, via shared participation in epithets.

The scene also participates in the multiplicity of context identified in the ritual text. The goddess figure is depicted in a shrine, and is offered incense by Paser, echoing the text’s representation of the ritual act. Yet where versions of scene 59B are accompanied by a vignette, the uraeus goddess is not usually depicted in a shrine, if she is depicted at all. The scene accompanying the KV 17 version depicts a large serpent coiled upon a *nb* basket (PM I:2<sup>2</sup>, 540; Hornung 1991, pl. 106–7), while the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty version of the Opening of the Mouth in the tomb of Rekhmire (TT 100: PM I:1<sup>2</sup>, 206–14) depicts the spell being recited before a statue of the tomb owner rather than the uraeus goddess (Otto 1960, II, pl. 1). Some deities are routinely represented in shrines in funerary contexts, for instance Ptah, who in the tomb of Nakhtamun at Deir el-Medina (TT 335: PM I:1<sup>2</sup>, 403; see §2.4) is shown in a shrine on the east wall of the burial chamber (Bruyère 1926, III, 163 fig. 109), or Osiris who often sits within a shrine in weighing of the heart scenes, such as the version in the outer room of the tomb chapel of Neferrenpet at el-Khokha (TT 178: PM I:1<sup>2</sup>, 284; Hofmann 1995, col. pl. 3a). The same is not true of the uraeus goddess of scene 59B. Furthermore, the scenes in both the KV 17 and TT 100 depict the ritual being

carried out by a funerary priest rather than the tomb owner himself, since the deceased is the intended beneficiary. The Pillar H scene and text stand in contrast to the norm, since both present Paser as the officiant who conducts the ritual on behalf of the king. Therefore, while the funerary dimension of the depicted ritual likely remains implicit by virtue of the composition's physical placement within a tomb space, the scene itself strongly evokes a temple context.

The recollection of temple settings within the scene and text, when considered alongside Paser's biographical information, suggests that the apparent dissonance between the iconography and identification of the Pillar H figure functions as a vehicle for the tomb owner's self-presentation. It has already been shown that the leonine form of the depicted goddess is evocative of the figure's secondary identification of Weret-Hekau (see §2.3.3), for whom this iconography is well-established in contemporary temple material. Meanwhile, the caption of the scene and the dedicatory section at the end of the ritual text both state that Paser was a high priest of Weret-Hekau, in addition to his office of vizier (caption l. 4–5; ritual text l. 11). His occupation of the role of high priest is also recorded in the biographical texts on pillars B and G (*KRI* I, 299.10; III, 9.5–6; Frood 2007, 151–2). Therefore, Pillar H not only carries a ritual text that invokes the goddess for whom Paser was a priest, but formats that text in a manner that resonates with temple ritual by presenting Paser as the conductor of the rite, then pairs the text with an illustrative scene that once more presents Paser as a cultic officiant within a temple-like setting, and finally depicts the recipient goddess in a form assumed by Weret-Hekau in scenes from temples that Paser himself likely had a role in planning and building. The interrelation of text and image on Pillar H, and the multiplicities inherent within those compositions, are purposefully utilised as a vehicle of Paser's biographical self-presentation, a process in which the image of the Pillar H goddess is a pivotal element.

Concurrent with the function of representing and materialising Paser's identity as high priest of Weret-Hekau, the network of associations on Pillar H is also used for the purpose of what is referred to here as 'emplacement'; the embedding and integration of a monument and its owner into the surrounding landscape, a process which is itself an aspect of self-presentation. Emplacement is achieved on Pillar H by captioning the depicted goddess with the primary identification of Meretseger. This is the only instance in which the recipient of the censuring ritual— whether as scene 59B or episode 5— is identified as Meretseger (see Otto 1960, I, 150–4; Calverley et al. 1933, pl. 4, 18, 26; 1935, pl. 4, 14, 22). She does, however, participate in the epithet 'Eye of Ra' that appears in the title of the spell (see l. 1; n. 3), being one of the general designations that subsume and coalesce the uraeus goddesses listed in the recitation. The choice to include Meretseger in the identifications of the recipient goddess was one of great local resonance in the context of the Theban west bank. Meretseger was an important deity to the communities of the area, something felt particularly strongly in material from Deir el-Medina. The brief discussion of the Neferabu stela (see §2.3.3) has already alluded to votive practices that centred the goddess, and her integral place in the religious life of the workmen's village is indicated by a nearby rock sanctuary dedicated to her and Ptah, located on the desert path between Deir el-Medina and the Valley of the Queens (PM I:2<sup>2</sup>, 706–9; Bruyère 1930, 5–59). Furthermore, through her identity as the *dhnt* (Leitz 2002, VII, 565–6) which is taken here to refer to the entire western escarpment, Meretseger enfolds and overlooks the very necropolis in which Paser is buried. The identification of the Pillar H figure as Meretseger therefore appears to utilise the multivocality of the ritual text and the fluidity of the group of goddesses invoked within it, and in so doing incorporates a distinctly local deity through whom Paser is able to emplace himself into the landscape surrounding his tomb,

whilst simultaneously using the same goddess figure to express the aspect of his social identity pertaining to Weret-Hekau and her priesthood.

Examination of contemporary material reveals similar strategies of emplacement to that exhibited in Pillar H, suggesting that the integration of monuments into their physical and cultural environments was both a central representational concern for the people commissioning them, and something for which the people designing them could utilise images of goddesses. One such example comes from this study's supplementary corpus of votive stelae owned by the scribe Ramose, Paser's colleague and contemporary. The object in question is a round topped limestone stela numbered Voronezh D-156 (PM I:2<sup>2</sup>, 733; *KRI* III, 622; Bogoslovsky 1972, 65–74, pl. 3–4; RCat. 7; see Fig. 10). The upper section of the stela carries a scene in which Taweret—depicted as a human woman with the head of a hippopotamus—is seated within a shrine. She wears a crown of cow horns and a sun disk, and in her left hand she holds a *was* sceptre whilst clasping an *ankh* in her right. In front of the shrine is an offering table piled with food and flowers, and behind the shrine stand three dom palms, an addition to the scene that echoes the goddess' caption in which she is named 'Taweret of the dom palms' (*KRI* III, 622.11). Below this scene, in the lower section of the stela, the main inscription is arranged into vertical registers, with the kneeling figures of Ramose and his wife Mutemwia depicted on the right-hand side of the section facing into the text. Both of Ramose's hands are raised in worship, whereas Mutemwia raises her left hand but supports a vessel with her right.

Like the Pillar H goddess in the tomb of Paser, the image of Taweret on Ramose's stela may evoke a temple context, and a local one at that. Taweret's form of a human woman with a hippopotamus head is not one she usually occupies in funerary contexts; the standard way of depicting the goddess is as a bipedal hippopotamus with varying combinations of human, feline, and crocodilian features (Gundlach 1986, 494–5; Sadek

1988, 125), and she is shown thus in perhaps her most recurrent context within tomb decoration, the vignette of BD Spell 186, for example in the inner room of TT 178 (PM I:1<sup>2</sup>, 284; Hofmann 1995, pl. 32–3). Ramose’s stela may therefore depict an aspect of the goddess that is not explicitly funerary.

Meanwhile, Taweret’s part-human manifestation is attested in other stelae from Deir el-Medina. A 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty stela of Amenmose (BM EA 1388: PM I:2<sup>2</sup>, 716; Bierbrier 1982, 32–3 pl. 76), of uncertain provenance but according to Bierbrier most probably from Deir el-Medina (*ibid.*), depicts Taweret seated as the foremost figure in a triad with Nekhbet and Hathor, and looking almost identical to the figure on Voronezh D-156. She appears similarly on the stela of Penbuy (Louvre E. 16374: PM I:2<sup>2</sup>, 705; Bruyère 1939, III, 198–9, 334, 335 fig 206, pl. 22), which Bruyère discovered *in situ* in room I of House VI in the south-west quadrant of the village (Bruyère 1939, III, 334, pl. 29 [VI.so]), a context that suggests the stela to be an object of domestic cult. Taweret is shown seated in the upper register of the stela as an individual recipient of worship, with the goddess Hathor-Isis depicted likewise in the lower register (a syncretism discussed further in §4.5.3). Taweret’s manifestation as an enthroned hippo-headed woman therefore appears to be a form associated with Deir el-Medina. Furthermore, since this iconography is distinct from how she is depicted in explicitly funerary contexts, and Taweret is depicted thus on the Penbuy stela that likely originates from a context of domestic worship, it seems reasonable to suggest that this form of Taweret is connected to her role as a recipient of cult. The shrine in which Ramose’s stela depicts Taweret might intentionally evoke a temple setting in which such worship took place. The most likely candidate for such a cultic foundation at Deir el-Medina, perhaps visually referenced by Ramose’s stela, is chapel 1213 to the west of the Ptolemaic temple precinct (PM I:2<sup>2</sup>, 690). Fragments of a

statuette and two stelae depicting Taweret were discovered within it (Bruyère 1930, 19–23; Sadek 1988, 70; Bomann 1991, 69–70), suggesting that the structure was dedicated to her.

Yet the crucial similarity between Voronezh D-156 and Pillar H is not simply that they both appear to evoke a temple setting through their respective goddesses, but that they both utilise connections to those goddesses for the benefit of self-presentation.

Intriguingly, Ramose's stela appears to achieve this aim through the owner's wife. The figure of Mutemwia in the lower section of the stela, shown kneeling behind her husband, is captioned as 'servant of Taweret' (*KRI III*, 622.15–6), indicating a role working in or for the foundation of the goddess that she and Ramose are praising. The inclusion of 'servant of Taweret' in Mutemwia's caption is likely a purposeful attempt to form a connection between her and the goddess, since the title does not appear in all Mutemwia's representations. Where she is shown on another of Ramose's stelae, Museo Egizio 50066 (PM I:2<sup>2</sup>, 733; *KRI III*, 621; Tosi and Roccati 1972, 102–3, 290; discussed in detail in §5.4), she is simply referred to as 'Lady of the House' (*KRI III*, 621.8–9). It is therefore likely that, just as the Pillar H compositions refer to Paser as the high priest of Weret-Hekau whilst he is depicted makes offerings to an enshrined deity whose form evokes that goddess, Voronezh D-156 represents Taweret and Mutemwia so that they resonate with one another, thereby embedding Mutemwia and—by virtue of his primary position in both image and text—Ramosé into the physical and religious landscape of Deir el-Medina, so that their names (as requested in the main inscription) might abide in the Taweret's chapel (*KRI III*, 622.14).

The Ramose example might therefore inform the interpretation of the Pillar H compositions in several ways. It suggests that a concern with emplacement was not a quirk of Paser's tomb programme, but a representational priority for both the owners and designers of monuments. However, it also casts light upon the innovative and unusual

nature of the Pillar H compositions. Ramose uses the form of the goddess on his stela to emphasise a specific relationship to her, a connection that comes via his wife yet, through androcentric gender hierarchies and their visual articulations, becomes his own. Paser also achieves emplacement through the image of a goddess, yet in doing so utilises the multiplicity of that goddess and the group of deities in which she participates to simultaneously present aspects of his biography. In Pillar H, Paser and his artists have constructed a multidimensional piece of iconography, a visual and textual unity that acts as a prism through which different facets of the tomb owner can be viewed. It does so through the nebulous fluidity of a group of uraeus goddesses, whose presence is focused through a single divine image. She is an individual recipient of worship, but she is far from singular.

The case study of the Pillar H in the tomb of Paser has several implications for the role of individual agent or recipient in private tomb decoration. Firstly, as noted early in the discussions, the Pillar H goddess is not one of the group of deities who most are most often depicted in this role, therefore the TT 106 example has provided a useful counterpoint to the impression gained by looking at overarching patterns. There are clear trends in the material, yet as is characteristic of Egyptian cultural media, exceptions, oddities, and plays with the norm can always be found. Secondly, the multiplicity observed within the compositions and the Pillar H goddess herself demonstrates that while individual agents may appear visually isolated, acting or receiving worship alone sometimes with no other divinities present, they can participate in networks of associations that extend beyond the bounds of their own scenes. The observation of this interconnectedness leads to the final implication, which takes the form of a question; what are the implications of the Pillar H goddess' multiplicity for goddesses as a category of

being? Is fluidity a particularly female quality? The question of multiplicity and goddesses' nature shall be returned to in subsequent chapters.

## 2.4. Nut and the Metaphor of Birth in the Tomb of Sennedjem (TT 1) at Deir el-Medina

### 2.4.1. From Sky to Ceiling: Nut in the Tomb of Sennedjem

The tomb of Sennedjem at Deir el-Medina (PM I:1<sup>2</sup>, 1–5), dating to the early years of Ramesses II (Shedid 1994, 50–1), is positioned on the lower slope of the escarpment to the south-west of the settlement (Bruyère 1959, pl. 1–3; Shedid 1994, 10; see Plan 3).

Sennedjem was a 'Servant in the Place of Truth', and the son of the foreman Khabekhnet and the lady Tahenu (Davies 1999, 43, chart 7). He and his wife Iyneferti are presented by the decorative programme as the primary occupants, though twenty bodies were discovered in the tomb, representing at least three successive generations of the family (Bruyère 1959, 2–3). The tomb was excavated by Gaston Maspero, Urbain Bourian, and Eduardo Toda y Güell in 1886, after its burial shaft was discovered by local prospectors (Maspero 1885, 201; Bruyère 1959, 1–3; Shedid 1994, 15–6).

The complex's above-ground chapel area once consisted of a courtyard containing Sennedjem's pyramid chapel, neighboured to the north by that of his son Khonsu and by an earlier chapel to the south, perhaps a monument to Sennedjem's father (Bruyère 1959, 5–12, pl. 4–5; Shedid 1994, 18–21). Sennedjem's pyramid has been reconstructed in the modern era (*ibid.*, 20). The entrance to the subterranean burial complex lies in the north west of the courtyard (Bruyère 1959, pl. 5). The suite consists of four main chambers, which Bernard Bruyère numbered rooms A–D in his publication of the tomb (1959, 20–6, pl. 7, 8). Room A is roughly excavated, and leads to room B which is square, vaulted, and undecorated. Three openings lead off from room B. The opening in the south wall leads

into a recessed opening that terminates without leading to a chamber. The west wall contains the entrance to a short narrow shaft containing a set of steps, leading to the unfinished room D. From the opening in the south wall one proceeds, via a short passage, to room C, the rectangular burial chamber with a vaulted ceiling and painted polychrome decoration (see Shedid 1994, 23 fig. 14). The burial chamber, including the exterior doorway, is the only decorated area of the tomb.

It is here, in Sennedjem's brightly painted burial chamber, that the object of this case study is found. The doorway in and out of the burial chamber is set into a short passageway. The ceiling of that passageway is dominated by a large depiction of a disembodied pair of arms, painted off-white with two breasts rendered prominently between them (PM I:1<sup>2</sup>, 1; Bruyère 1959, pl. 18.2; Wahab 1959, pl. 34c; Shedid 1994, 27–8, 62–3; see Fig. 11). The arms extend upwards from between the two hills of the horizon, whose shape echoed in the rendering of the breasts (e.g. Shedid 1994, 28), and the outstretched hands clasp a red sun disk. Above the sun is a large sky hieroglyph, painted blue, that brackets the scene together with the hills of the horizon. Beside the vignette, on the section of ceiling that is nearest the external doorway, are three vertical registers of text and a damaged figure of Sennedjem with his arms raised in adoration.

Bruyère identified the arms depicted on the passageway's ceiling as belonging to Nut, based upon the 'doctrinal use of astronomical ceilings' (1959, 25) in which Nut is shown with the sun, having given birth to it. The interpretation is followed by Shedid (1994, 28), and by Porter and Moss in their entry for the scene in the *Topographical Bibliography* (I:1<sup>2</sup>, 1). The identification is likely secure, as while the arms are not captioned as Nut, the motif appears to be taken from the 'sunrise vignette' that often features Nut's arms and breasts (BD Spell 16: Naville 1886, I, pl. 21–2). Furthermore, similar representations of the goddess appear elsewhere at Deir el-Medina, such as on the

ceiling above the entrance staircase into the burial complex of Nakhtamun (TT 335: PM I:1<sup>2</sup>, 401; Bruyère 1926, 117 fig. 79; discussed in §2.4.3). The artists of TT 1 have turned the ceiling of the passageway into the sky itself, and depicted the sky goddess lifting up the sun disk, which the text spoken by the figure of Sennedjem on the right-hand side of the composition (Bruyère 1959, 55 B.1) indicates has just risen from the eastern horizon. The function of the scene, and the goddess-specific nuance of Nut's agency in fulfilling that function, becomes clear when the composition is contextualised among the rest of the passage's decoration.

#### 2.4.2. Going Forth by Day: The Solar Iconography of the TT 1 Passageway

The depiction of Nut on the ceiling of the entrance passage does not exist in isolation. If moving through the short corridor from within the burial chamber, one is flanked by compositions to the east and west. The east wall carries a scene in its upper section, beneath which are nine vertical registers of text (PM I:1<sup>2</sup>, 1; Bruyère 1959, 25–6, 54 A, pl. 18.1; Wahab 1959, pl. 34.a; Shedid 1994, 27, 63; see Fig. 12). The scene depicts the Great Cat, which sits with its back to the *ished* tree and uses a knife to mutilate a damaged image of an undulating snake. The vignette, and the text beneath it, is taken from BD Spell 17 (Lapp 2006, 29.d–43.b; Naville 1886, I, pl. 30). It commemorates the sun god's triumph over Apep, a victory that comes shortly before his rebirth from the eastern horizon in the morning. On the opposite side of the passageway, on the west wall, another vignette appears above a text arranged into ten vertical registers. The scene depicts the Ruty lions, sitting back-to-back with the horizon and sun disk between them, and another blue sky hieroglyph depicted overhead (PM I:1<sup>2</sup>, 1; Bruyère 1959, 25–6, 55 C, pl. 18.3; Wahab 1959, pl. 34.b; Shedid 1994, 26–7, 62; see Fig. 12). Like the compositions on the east wall of the passage, the scene and text on the west wall are taken from BD Spell 17; in the full

version of the spell, this section immediately precedes the one on the east wall (Lapp 2006, 13.d–29.b; Naville 1886, I, pl. 27), and describes the primordial nature of the sun god as the self-created creator who is one with the primeval ocean.

The compositions that cover the walls and ceiling of TT 1's entrance passageway form a representational unity that revolves around the solar cycle. As noted by Bruyère and Shedid, the spatial arrangement of the scenes and texts is appropriate to the stages of the sun's journey that they represent; compositions on the east wall pertain to the sun in the process of rising, the ceiling depicts the sun in the sky, and the west wall shows the sun disk once again settling into the horizon (Bruyère 1959, 25; Shedid 1994, 28). However, this study's interpretation of the scenes departs slightly from that of Bruyère and Shedid, who take the east wall to be the beginning of the iconographical narrative. They understand the Great Cat scene as representing the newly born sun, the arms of Nut on the ceiling as holding up the sun at its zenith, and the Ruty lions as guarding the gates of the horizon when the sun finally sets (*ibid.*). While such an interpretation does appear consistent with the placement of the scenes and texts on adjoining surfaces— Bruyère and Shedid's proposed ordering moves from the east wall of the passage, up to the ceiling, and down again to the west wall— it is not consistent with the internal organisation of the compositions themselves. The section of BD Spell 17 on the east wall, with its accompanying vignette, does not pertain to the sun when it rises, but in the stages of the sun's journey immediately preceding its rising. The sun god must defeat his enemies in order to be reborn, therefore he is still in the underworld in the moment represented by the spell. The actual moment of sunrise is represented by the depiction of Nut and the sun disk on the ceiling, something that is already implied by the similarity to the sunrise vignette of BD Spell 16 (see §2.4.1), but is made plain by the text that accompanies the adoring figure of Sennedjem, a text dedicated to 'Ra when he rises in the eastern horizon of the sky'

(Bruyère 1959, 55 B.1). Finally, the excerpt of BD Spell 17 on the west wall, whilst still appearing to evoke the setting of the sun, actually comes earlier in the full version of the text than the Great Cat section. Therefore, while the three scenes that surround the doorway do indeed create a narrative of the solar cycle, the story being told is not of the sun's journey during the day, but of its triumph during the night and its rebirth out from the underworld and into the sky. The chronology of the texts suggest that the west wall is the starting point, where the compositions evoke sun god's descent beyond the western horizon and perhaps a return to his more primordial state, after which he defeats the opponents of his regeneration on the east wall, and finally the action moves to ceiling, where the depiction of Nut raising up the new born sun is not the story's midpoint, but its climax.

The function having an image of Nut as a literal and figurative high point is suggested by the reintroduction of an important element to the representational network of the passageway, an element that would once have been its focal point and centrepiece; a painted wooden door, now in the Cairo Museum (JE 27303: PM I:1<sup>2</sup>, 3; Bruyère 1959, 53, pl. 17; Shedid 1994, 64; Haring 2016, pl. 1–2; see Fig. 13). The decoration of the interior side of the door is organised in the same way as that of the east and west walls; there is a scene in the upper section, depicting Sennedjem and his wife Iyeferti playing *senet* in a pavilion with a table of offerings facing them from the other side of the game board, beneath which is a text arranged into eleven vertical registers. When the door was in situ and closed, the effect would have been to create a niche, the *senet* scene and its text being the central image on the back 'wall', framed by the other scenes in the passageway. Like the scenes on the east and west walls, the door's vignette is taken from BD Spell 17 (Naville 1886, I, pl. 23). The text below the vignette is a composite of two separate spells. The first six columns contain the end of BD Spell 72 (Bruyère 1959, 53.1–6; Lapp 2011,

415.a–429.c), which asks that deceased might go forth from the tomb during the day in any form that they desire, and return safely to the Field of Reeds afterwards. The remaining five columns are taken from the opening of BD Spell 17 (Bruyère 1959, 53.7–11; Lapp 2006, 7.c–e), to which the *senet* vignette is connected. The chosen lines of BD 17 also discuss the deceased’s ability to leave the tomb during the day, in any desired form, and then return once more to the necropolis, but then juxtaposes those actions with the wish that the tomb owner may ‘play *senet* whilst sitting in a pavilion and going forth as a living *ba*’ (Bruyère 1959, 53.9–10; Lapp 2006, *ibid.*).

The two core motifs within the door’s compositions are the ability to come and go from the tomb– to ‘go forth by day’ (Bruyère 1959, 53.2) and move freely between the worlds of the living and the dead (for the development of this concept within New Kingdom mortuary literature, see Assmann 2001, 209–25)– and the imagery of the *senet* game. A brief note is necessary on the relationship between these ideas (for which the author draws primarily on Peter A. Piccione’s work the religious significance of *senet*), in order to contextualise how they incorporate and utilise the scenes of the surrounding passageway, including the image of Nut. The name *senet* comes from the verb *sni* meaning ‘to pass’ (Piccione 2007, 54), and describes the movement of the players across the board. Over time, this movement and the board itself accrued several layers of symbolism. The game came to represent the transformative journey of the *ba* through the Netherworld (Assmann 1983, 347–8), and even movement between the realms of the living and the dead (Piccione 1990, 299), something attested in funerary literature as early as the Middle Kingdom; CT Spell 405 asks that the deceased ‘should play *senet* together with those who are upon the earth [...] Cause that he should go to his house and that he should inspect his children forever and ever’ (CT V, 210a–e). By the 20th Dynasty at the latest, *senet* had also become associated with the journey of the sun god through the underworld (Piccione

2007, 60), and *senet* scenes began to be placed on doors or near doorways in New Kingdom tomb decoration, evoking the physical passage of the *ba* in and out of the tomb (ibid.).

This overview of *senet*'s symbolism brings the iconographic mechanisms of the TT 1 passageway into clear focus. An emphasis on movement between the tomb and the outside world is evident in the door's inscription, an artificially created text whose two constituent spell fragments both describe the deceased leaving the tomb during the day and returning at night. Furthermore, while Piccione gives the 20<sup>th</sup> Dynasty as the earliest secure date for a connection between *senet* and the sun's night time journey, the spatial relationship of the door's scene and text to the surrounding solar imagery suggests very strongly that similar associations are operational in TT 1. The entanglement of solar imagery with the idea of the deceased's movement in and out of the tomb is perhaps especially resonant in the passageway, given that the scenes on the walls and ceiling appear to evoke an iconographic story of the sun's journey that echoes the progress of the tomb owner in the text. The proposed reordering of scenes identifies the west wall, where the sun enters the underworld, as the beginning of the narrative, with the emergence of the sun from the horizon as its climax. The scenes and texts on the walls of the passageway therefore tell the story of the sun's exit from the underworld, before eventually returning to it with the promise of re-entering the world of the living the next morning, mirroring the deceased's cyclic excursions from the tomb that are described on the door and symbolised by the image of Sennedjem and Iyneferti playing *senet*. The scenes and texts of the TT 1 passageway might therefore be characterised as an iconographic network that facilitates the tomb owner's transition between states and spaces, a process that utilises solar imagery to identify him with the sun, thereby allowing him to participate in its daily renewal and emergence into the world. In this context, the image of Nut on the ceiling can be

understood to fulfil a vital role, one that utilises ideas that are inextricably enmeshed in ancient Egyptian cultural models of femaleness: the metaphor of birth.

#### 2.4.3. Tomb as Body, Transition as Birth: The Distinctly Female Agency of Nut

The image of Nut lifting the sun disk on the ceiling of the TT 1 passage represents a pivotal juncture in the iconographic narrative of the area. It depicts the point at which the sun leaves the underworld and re-enters the sky, and since the solar journey acts as a precedent for Sennedjem's daily return to the world of the living, the figure of Nut might be understood as both representing and enacting the very moment of transition. The crucial process that enables Sennedjem to move in and out of the tomb is therefore the same as that which allows the sun to return to the sky: birth from the body of Nut, the sky goddess herself.

Nut's role as mother of the sun disk is a well-established aspect of her persona and of the solar cycle (e.g. Piankoff 1934, 57–9), observable in sources as early as the *Pyramid Texts*. For example, PT Spell 451 identifies the king with the sun god by stating 'you are Ra, who came out of Nut, who gives birth to Ra every day' (PT II, §1688). The bodily relationship between Nut and the moments of sunset and sunrise is visually represented in the Cenotaph of Seti I at Abydos, a monument roughly contemporary with TT 1. Nut is depicted stretched out and held up by Shu on the west side of the roof of the sarcophagus chamber (PM VI, 30; Frankfort 1933, II, pl. 81). A winged sun disk is positioned near her mouth, and a group of hieroglyphs inscribed on the goddess' cheeks reads 'the western horizon'. At the other end of the goddess' body, near her pubic triangle, another group of hieroglyphs writes 'the eastern horizon'. Beneath this, next to Nut's thighs, is an image of the newly reborn sun as a winged scarab. The Abydos example demonstrates that the idea of Nut giving birth to the sun god at dawn continued to be active in the period that TT 1

was decorated, also that the solar journey was understood to occur within and through her body. She is the physical matrix of the sun's rejuvenation, an association that is drawn upon by the image of Nut on the ceiling of the TT 1 passageway, through the moment of the solar cycle that it depicts and its position as the climax of the passage's iconographic narrative. Therefore, since Nut's scene is mobilised for the purpose of 'going forth by day' that is expressed through the door's text and *senet* scene, Sennedjem's ability to move in and out of the tomb is facilitated by Nut via the metaphor of birth.

Nut's function within the tomb, and her agency in carrying it out, is distinctly female, given that ancient Egyptian conceptions of femaleness coalesce around bodies with breasts, vaginas, and other biological features associated with childbearing (see §1.1 for discussion of the binary and essentialising nature of Egyptian gender categories). Furthermore, by the very act of giving birth to the sun and thus to the tomb owner, her mode of agency is highly embodied. Her role in the tomb programme is articulated in far more tangible, physical terms than many other deities, and might form a particularly strong contrast with gods. While the deceased may hope for his body to be tended by Anubis, or that he should participate in the resurrection of Osiris, such forms of transformation are enacted upon the deceased by the deity or else function through a temporary habitation of a god's identity and mythic narrative. There is a degree of separation or abstraction. While the iconographic complex of the passageway allows Sennedjem to inhabit the persona and narrative of the sun god in a similar manner, the implication is that Nut takes him into her body, transforms him, and gives birth to him into the world of the living. Her agency is not enacted upon a distanced other, but occurs within herself, through her own body. The mode and quality of this agency appears to be particular to goddesses, something that is reminiscent of anthropologist Sherry Ortner's observation that various (though not all) 'patriarchal' cultures can associate women with concepts of 'nature'— with what is bodily

and physical– while men often assume some distance from that state, being the key agents in cultural processes perceived to tame or shape nature (Ortner 1974, 71–83).

The bodily dimension of Nut’s agency is probably materialised in the placement of her scene on the ceiling of the passageway. Depicting the sky goddess on the roof is not an isolated piece of clever spatial organisation; it participates in a long-standing identification between Nut and the ceilings of burial chambers (also grounded in solar narratives), a connection that is observable in some of the earliest sources. For instance, in the version PT Spell 364 in the 6<sup>th</sup> Dynasty pyramid of Teti, the king is told: ‘You have been given to your mother Nut in her identity of the burial place, she has collected you in her identity of the burial chamber, and you have been elevated to her in her identity of the tomb’s superstructure’ (PT I, 331 d–e; translation from Allen 2015<sup>2</sup>, 84). Nut’s association with the ceilings of Old Kingdom royal burial chambers was perhaps reflected in their decoration, since the ceilings of the antechamber and sarcophagus chamber in the 5<sup>th</sup> Dynasty pyramid of Unas are decorated with stars (Piankoff 1968, pl. 4–6). From the Middle Kingdom onwards these associations grew to incorporate coffin lids (see Assmann 2001, 165–173), something that is echoed in *The Tale of Sinuhe* when the protagonist that the Lady of All will spend eternity ‘above him’ (Koch 1990, 58 B.171–2). Nevertheless, her identification with the ceilings of burial chambers persisted into the New Kingdom alongside her coffin connotations, as evidenced in the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty tomb of Djehuty at Dra Abu el-Naga (TT 11: PM I:1, 20–4) where an image of Nut appears on the roof, alongside *Coffin Text* spells that invoke her (Galán 2013, 119–20, 122–3). Within this wider landscape of architectural symbolism, it does not seem coincidental that an image of Nut in the moments after birthing the sun is positioned on the ceiling of the TT 1 passageway, being the area of the tomb’s structure that is conceptualised as her body and that is also nearest the doorway to the outside world into which she births the symbolically solar tomb

occupant. It appears that the content of Nut's image utilises the metaphor of birth to facilitate Sennedjem's transition between spaces, a function reinforced by its position in the tomb plan, which also utilises the idea that the tomb is the body of Nut from which Sennedjem is born.

The TT 1 case study provides a specific example in which a goddess' individual agency with a tomb programme is demonstrably conceived and articulated through her female nature, constituting a form of agency that is perhaps particular to goddesses. To draw the case study and the chapter to a close, a tentative suggestion is made; that this same function of facilitating transition between spaces via the bodily metaphor of birth, embodied in the physical matrix of the tomb structure, might be observable in other depictions of Nut in tombs beyond TT 1.

Three other tombs at Deir el-Medina have images of Nut on the ceiling of a passage or above a doorway in a manner reminiscent of TT 1, belonging to Hay (TT 267), Irynefer (TT 290), and to Nakhtamun (TT 335). In the 20<sup>th</sup> Dynasty tomb of Hay, a scene appears above the outer doorway into the inner burial chamber that shows the deceased worshipping the arms of Nut, who holds the sun disk (PM I:1<sup>2</sup>, 347; Griffith Institute Photo DM 267.1). In the tomb of Irynefer, a winged figure of Nut is positioned above the inner side of the doorway into the burial chamber, her wings turned downward to frame the arch of the door (PM I:1<sup>2</sup>, 372; Bruyère and Kuentz 2015<sup>2</sup>, pl. 49.2; see Fig. 14). The tomb of Nakhtamun contains two such depictions of Nut. The first appears on the ceiling above the staircase down into the burial complex (PM I:1<sup>2</sup>, 401; Bruyère 1926, 117 fig. 79; see Plan. 3; Fig. 15), where she is depicted frontally and kneeling beside the western mountain, clasping the sun disk between her downward stretched arms while Osiris stands beside her. The shape in which Nut holds her arms as she clasps the sun, her hanging breasts, and the presence of an Osiris element (here the god himself rather than the *djed* pillar) evoke her

appearances in versions of the sunrise vignette (Naville 1886, I, pl. 21.Ba). Directly beneath the sun disk she clasps is a representation of a tomb entrance, visually echoing the physical setting of the scene. The second example from TT 335 appears on the ceiling of the passageway into the burial chamber (PM I:1<sup>2</sup>, 403; Bruyère 1926, 144 fig. 95; see Plan 4; Fig. 16). The large scene, which covers the entire surface of the passage's ceiling, depicts Nut in full anthropomorphic form, wearing a pleated wig, a head band, and a bead dress. She is shown standing with a pyramidal tomb chapel against the western mountain to the right of her, while to the left is an emblem of Osiris. The tomb and emblem reach only the height of Nut's thighs, while her image stretches across the entire length of the ceiling. She is captioned by a vertical group of hieroglyphs that runs down in front of her face, naming her 'Nut the great, who birthed the gods' (Bruyère 1926, 142). It is intriguing that notions of birth should be evoked in reference to an image of Nut whose placement in a passageway appears so highly deliberate.

These examples are all associated with transitional areas, either in and out of the burial chamber or of the whole burial complex. Furthermore, the scenes in TT 267 and the entrance staircase of TT 335 are both solar in nature, and are perhaps the clearest parallels to TT 1's use of the metaphor of birth through Nut's association with both the sun's journey and the physical structure of the tomb. However, while the examples in TT 290 and the passage internal passage of TT 335 are not explicitly solar, their placement also suggests an association between Nut, the physical framework of the tomb, and the idea of movement and transition. The scene in TT 335's passageway fills the entire surface of the ceiling, to the exclusion of any other vignettes, with the effect that the image of Nut dominates this transitional space between the burial chamber and the rest of the tomb. Furthermore, her connection to ideas of birth is evoked in her caption. The winged image of Nut in TT 290 is also associated with a transitional point, as she kneels above and

frames the door out from the burial chamber. To the right of the doorway, the hair of a female figure in a scene lower down on the wall is obscured by the tip of Nut's wing (see Fig. 14). The interaction between the two images suggests that the placement of Nut above the doorway was the priority, supporting the proposed association between Nut and transitional spaces and architectural elements.

Nonetheless, while similar symbolism and mechanisms seem to be at work in these two examples as are observable in TT 1, TT 267, and at the entrance of TT 335, the visual content of the scenes themselves are not explicitly solar. While it is possible that Nut's role in the solar cycle is so integral to her persona that it is an inherent association whenever she is depicted— something particularly suggestive in TT 335, where the image of Nut in the passageway is rendered in the same yellow monochrome decoration as the rest of the decorative programme (see Bruyère 1926, 116–71; Bruyère 1952, 18–9; Hofmann 2004, 69–73, 88–90)— such an interpretation creates a gap between the understanding of the images and their actual content. The wider use of Nut's embodied agency as a mode of transition within tomb spaces must therefore remain a suggestion, yet whether the function of Nut's image in the passage of TT 1 is unique or not, it nonetheless represents a form of individual agency that is distinctly female.

Over the course of this chapter, some general trends have been identified in the depiction of individual agents and recipients in tomb settings, as well as some exceptions to those patterns and possible peculiarities of individual agency among female deities. The role is consistently attested in both the Theban and Memphite samples as one of the most frequent means of depicting goddesses, yet acting or receiving worship alone still appears insufficient to place them on par with gods, whose higher status is often maintained through their greater numbers and occupation of the most prestigious areas of the tomb plan. The goddesses who are depicted as individual agents are mostly taken from a

relatively bounded group, whose functions— like that of tomb decoration more broadly— largely pertain to the regeneration of the deceased or welcoming him into the necropolis. However, there are variations and exceptions to these trends, and while goddesses’ individual agency may be hierarchically secondary within tomb spaces, in certain cases they appear to act in a way that is not replicated among gods. The Pillar H goddess exhibits multiplicity, being a member of a highly fluid group of goddesses, and the figure of Nut in TT 1 functions through a series of metaphors pertaining to Egyptian cultural ideas of women and their bodies. The two case studies have provided the first indications that while goddesses may hold a secondary position in various contexts, there may be space within that position to exercise their own modes of agency.

### 3. Individual Agents or Recipients in Temple Environments

#### 3.1. Introduction to Chapter 3

The third chapter considers the individual agency of goddesses in examples from the thesis' selected temple case studies: the second hypostyle hall of the temple of Seti I at Abydos, and the Small Temple at Abu Simbel, built by Ramesses II. As discussed in the introductory chapter, the temple material is treated separately to the tombs of the Theban and Memphite samples since their decoration has different core functions (see §1.2). While the images of goddesses in private tombs ultimately appear for the benefit of the owner's regeneration, most temple scenes serve to represent and perpetuate interactions between the king and the divine. The emphasis on depicting such interactions, and the relationships that they build, may account for the fact that individual agents and recipients make up a far greater proportion of goddess figures in the two examples presented here than in tomb decoration (see §3.2.3; §3.3.3). Furthermore, John Baines has noted that temples constitute 'total works of art, not only of architecture and relief' (1997, 232), whose elements operate as a unity to create an experiential narrative through which the presence of the residing deity maintains a balanced world order (*ibid.*, 217–32). To incorporate this experiential dimension into the analysis of these spaces, the following sections use description more extensively than those of the previous chapter. Therefore, due to differences in the processes at work in the material, and the methods used to discuss those processes, the individual agents of temple environments are treated separately to their counterparts in tombs.

The following examples were chosen from the temple case studies because they contain depictions of individual agents in shared or composite spaces, in which the

decorative programme coheres around multiple deities of different genders (the second hypostyle hall at Abydos: §3.2), and in a context that centres a goddess and her associates as the primary focus (the Small Temple at Abu Simbel: §3.3). Therefore, the first part of the chapter evaluates the depiction of goddesses within and between constituent areas of a monument, observing how those different spaces shape goddesses' agency, while the second considers gender dynamics and priorities of prominence when a goddess' area of influence extends to an entire temple. The picture that emerges of divine female agency in these contexts is one of mediation and boundaries, yet also—crucially for the development of these discussions— one of possibility.

## 3.2. Demarcations of Space, and Potentials of the Peripheral: Individual Agents in the Second Hypostyle Hall of the Temple of Seti I at Abydos

### 3.2.1. The Second Hypostyle Hall in Context

The temple of Seti I at Abydos is located at the edge of the low desert and the cultivation (see Plan 5), about a kilometre to the southeast of the main enclosure of Osiris-Khentyamentiu (PM VI, xx; O'Connor 2009, 25 fig. 3, 43). While many scholarly works reference the monument as an exceptional example of New Kingdom temple architecture, the most detailed records of it are those by Auguste Mariette (1869–80), Amice Calverley et al. (1933–58), and Rosalie David (2016). The photographs in Calverley et al.'s publications have been used as the primary source material for the following analyses. The temple is an L-shaped structure with a southwest-northeast alignment (PM VI, xx)—hereafter referred to simply as west-east— and is arranged as a series of terraces. The outer courts and first hypostyle hall were completed by Ramesses II (Mariette 1869, I, 9–14; David 2016, 31–2, 46–7; O'Connor 2009, 46), beyond which are the inner areas built by Seti. The floor level rises with each area until reaching the temple's seven main chapels,

dedicated (moving north to south) to Horus, Isis, Osiris, Amun-Ra, Ra-Horakhty, Ptah, and the last to Seti himself (PM VI, 4; Calverley et al. 1933, pl. 1A). The interdependence of these chapels and the decoration of the second hypostyle hall is demonstrated in the following section (see §3.2.2).

The second hypostyle hall is large transverse space, with doorways to the preceding first hypostyle hall in the east and the entrances of the seven main chapels in the west (PM VI, 4; see Plan 6). Between the seven doorways in the west wall are six niches. The hall's floor level is split between two elevations. The eastern half is on the same elevation as the first hypostyle hall, while the western half is raised to the same level as the seven chapels and the other halls and complexes that lead off from the western half of the space. The two levels are bridged by seven ramps, which are aligned with the chapel entrances. The internal space of the hall contains 36 columns. In describing the hall, Calverley et al. simultaneously group the columns into three transverse rows of 12— rows A, B, and C— and by their number within that sequence (e.g. 7.A–C; Calverley et al. 1958, pl. 66). The columns of row A are nearest the chapels, and occupy the same raised elevation, while rows B and C are positioned in the lower east half of the hall (and thus have taller columns in order to maintain a level ceiling). The first grouping of three transverse rows is useful for describing the hall's architectural layout. As shall become clear in the following discussions, however, their numerical grouping (as twelve short rows of three columns) appears to be the operative principle in their decoration.

### 3.2.2. A Space of Spaces

In order to assess how the individual agency of goddesses is represented in and shaped by the space, one must first understand the structure and organisation of the space itself. It will be shown here that the second hypostyle hall is subdivided into seven decorative units.

Each is aligned with one of the chapels in the west, and the decoration of each unit pertains to its chapel's resident deity. Calverley et al. already noted a sense of delineation within the hall in their publication of its scenes, stating that the space incorporates seven 'alleys' or processional ways leading out from the chapels in the west, with loosely-defined 'inter-alleys' between them (Calverley et al. 1958, vii–iii). However, the decoration of these areas is in fact structured according to a standardised pattern, with clear delineations between one area and the next.

The existence of these decorative units can be demonstrated by choosing one of the seven chapels, to which the decorative units are attached, and moving down through the space, taking note of the content and arrangement of scenes as one does so. The area presented here for this illustrative purpose is the segment of the hall that aligns with the chapel of Amun-Ra, (see Plan 6; Fig. 17), since this chapel occupies a prominent location on the temple's central axis, and the surrounding decoration is typical of the pattern replicated across the hall. Reference will also be made to scenes in the bordering areas associated with the chapels of Osiris (to the north) and Ra-Horakhty (to the south), to illustrate the clear delineation between these areas that is observable in the content and organisation of scenes.

The decorative units that make up the hall are established and delineated around the chapel entrances. The entrance doorway of Amun-Ra's chapel (numbered IVWb in David's plan of the hall; 2016, 69) occupies much of the space between the base and top of the west wall, so that the only space for scenes is on either side of it. To the north (right) of the portal, in the lower section of the wall, is the niche that marks the midpoint between the chapels of Amun-Ra and Osiris (PM VI, 9; Calverley et al. 1958, pl. 20, 34–5), and to the south (left) is the one marking the midpoint with the chapel of Ra-Horakhty (PM VI, 9; Calverley et al. 1958, pl. 23, 33). Two scenes appear on the lower sections of wall between

the Amun-Ra doorway and the niches on either side, each depicting the king in an interaction with a deity. To the north, Seti is given the breath of life by Khonsu, who stands on the side of the scene nearest the Amun-Ra shrine while the king stands with his back to the niche (PM VI, 9; Calverley et al. 1958, pl. 20; David 2016, 69.6; see Fig. 18). To the south, Seti is suckled by a seated figure of Mut, who once again is positioned nearest the entrance to Amun-Ra's chapel while the king is nearest the niche (PM VI, 9; Calverley et al. 1958, pl. 23; David 2016, 69.V; see Fig. 18). Similar scenes appear between the niches and the chapels of Osiris and Ra-Horakhty beyond, and their figures are organised according to the same pattern whereby the deity appears nearest the chapel, while the king is nearer the niche. Between the northern niche and the chapel of Osiris, Seti is shown sitting on the lap of Isis who sits with her back to the chapel doorway (PM VI, 9; Calverley et al. 1958, pl. 20; David 2016, 69.7; see Fig. 18), while between the southern niche and the chapel of Ra-Horakhty, Seti is given the breath of life by Iues-Aaes who sits nearest the shrine's entrance (PM VI, 9; Calverley et al. 1958, pl. 23; David 2016, 69.VI; see Fig. 18).

The upper section of the west wall is uninterrupted by niches; the spaces between chapel entrances are taken up by large singular compositions. Each of these scenes contains three figures, which occupy the left, centre, and right sections of the composition. The figures on the left and right of the scenes are always the depictions of the deity who resides in the chapel nearest that side of the scene, while the central figure is almost always the king (see §3.2.4 for an adjustment to this pattern). In the upper scene between the chapels of Amun-Ra and Osiris, Seti kneels in the centre (directly above the niche below) and receives kingly regalia as well as years of reign and the breath of life, given by the seated figures of Amun Ra on the left (looking inwards from his chapel) and Osiris on the right (facing from his: PM VI, 9; Calverley et al. 1958, pl. 19; David 2016, 69.5; see Fig.

18). Between the chapels of Amun-Ra and Ra-Horakhty in the south, the upper scene shows the king kneeling once again, receiving weapons and symbols of life and longevity from Amun-Ra on the right, and Ra-Horakhty (in ram-headed form) sitting on the left in the direction of his chapel (PM VI, 9; Calverley et al. 1958, pl. 22; David 2016, 69.IV; see Fig. 18).

The deities who appear in the scenes or sides of scenes that are nearest to Amun-Ra's chapel— whether in the lower scenes between the chapel doorway and the niches on either side, or in the sides of the upper scenes nearest the shrine— are all associated with the resident god in some way. Mut and Khonsu, Amun's consort and son, appear to look outwards from the chapel door on its south and north sides. In the upper scenes, it is Amun-Ra himself who emerges from the shrine's interior. The same can be said of the chapel of Osiris to the north, from whence Osiris and Isis emerge, and of the shrine of Ra-Horakhty to the south, out from which comes Ra-Horakhty and Iues-Aaes, the latter being one of the goddesses associated with the hand of Atum (Vandier 1964, 69–70; Raue 1999, 94; Brunner 1980, 217–8) and therefore identifiable as Ra-Horakhty's consort. Thus, for the observer standing before the entrance of Amun-Ra's chapel, an impression is created of a zone of decorative domination that surrounds Amun's shrine, extending outwards from the entrance. The northern and southern boundaries of this zone are marked on the lower wall by the niches and on the upper wall by the figures of Seti, beyond which one enters the neighbouring zones associated with the chapels of Osiris and Ra-Horakhty. The delineations observable here are part of a pattern repeated across the hypostyle hall; they form the basis of the seven decorative units.

Moving eastwards through the hall, between the two rows of columns that run either side of the central axis, the delineation of space observable on the west wall is maintained. The columns that run along the north side of the axis are numbered 6.A–C by

Calverley et al. (1958, pl. 66), while those running along the north are 7.A–C (*ibid.*). Each column carries four scenes depicting the king interacting with a deity, predominately in the form of an offering ritual, though in some of the scenes Seti receives life or years of reign from the god or goddess with whom he is shown. In the scenes on these two rows of columns, the deity depicted with the king is either Amun, one of his forms, or a deity associated with him, such as his consort (all Mut except for one occurrence of Amunet on the southern scene of 7.B), or his son Khonsu (PM VI, 9; Calverley et al. 1958, pl. 72). Moving laterally northwards, and crossing the point marked in the west wall by the niche and image of Seti, one reaches columns 5.A–C, which run along the southern side of the pathway down from the chapel of Osiris. The scenes on these columns all pertain to Osiris, depicting either him, Isis, or Horus (PM VI, 9; Calverley et al. 1958, pl. 71). Moving back southwards, past the Amun columns and then once more past an area aligning with a boundary niche of the west wall, one arrives at columns 8.A–C that run down from the chapel of Ra-Horakhty. The scenes on these columns all relate to the sun god, depicting either Ra-Horakhty, Atum, or a ‘Hand of Atum’ goddess, with the addition of the solar syncretism ‘Onuris-Shu, son of Ra’ (PM VI, 9; Calverley et al. 1958, pl. 74). The same delineation of scenes visible on the west wall is also observable among the columns. The identities of the gods and goddesses depicted on a column are determined by the chapel whose pathway that column is lining; they fall within that chapel’s decorative unit, the boundaries of which align with the niches of the west wall.

Finally, one reaches the east wall, and one of the doorways into the first hypostyle hall (see Fig. 19). The door is aligned to the entrance of the Amun chapel at the other end of the hall, and is flanked by scenes to the north and south, which occupy the wall space between this door and its neighbours, themselves aligned to the chapels of Osiris and Ra-Horakhty. The wall spaces between the doorways are divided into upper and lower

registers, each of which carry two mirrored offering scenes. The scenes are separated by vertical bands of text that act as dividing lines. Note that these dividing lines are directly opposite the boundary niches on the other side of the hall (see Fig. 17). Deities depicted in the topmost offering scenes sit with their backs to the dividing line, facing outward towards the kneeling figure of the king and out through the doorway to which their half of the register is nearest. Here, at the door aligned with the chapel of Amun-Ra, the upper scenes to the north and south show Amun himself sitting nearest the door (Calverley et al. 1958, pl. 47–8; David 2016, 69.IIIEb–VEb, 103–6; see Fig. 19). On the far side of the northern scene Osiris sits facing the doorway aligned with his own chapel (Calverley et al. 1958, pl. 48; David 2016, 69.IVEb–VEb, 105–6; see Fig. 19), and to the south Ra-Horakhty sits nearest the door aligned with his (Calverley et al. 1958, pl. 47; David 2016, 69.IIIEb–IVEb, 103–5; see Fig. 19).

The same deities as appear in the east wall's upper section also appear in its lower register, though here they are shown standing as they receive their offerings from the king. The deities occupy the same areas of the scenes (their backs to the central dividing line), thus to the north and south of the doorway aligned with Amun's chapel, Amun-Ra is shown facing outward into the first hypostyle hall (Calverley et al. 1958, pl. 47–8; David 2016, 69.IIIEb–VEb, 103–6; see Fig. 19), as do Osiris and Ra-Horakhty near their respective doorways (*ibid.*).

There is a clear delineation between the decoration of the surfaces surrounding or aligned to Amun-Ra's chapel, and the decoration of neighbouring areas. A zone of representational dominance expands outwards from the chapel entrance in the west wall (see Fig. 17), stopping at the niches that mark its northern and southern borders, and then extends outwards through the space, encompassing columns 6.A–C and 7.A–C. The borders of this zone make contact with the east wall at the midpoint between the doorways

into the first hypostyle hall, incorporating the sections of wall that lie either side of the exit aligned to Amun's chapel. The area enclosed within these borders is Amun-Ra's decorative unit, which functions as a self-contained space in the organisation of its scenes, as indicated by the orientation of Amun's images on the east wall; in the upper and lower scenes that frame the exit, his back is against the borders of his area, marked here by the vertical centreline. If these borders are understood as enclosing 'walls', the orientation of Amun's figures on the east wall could be contextualised as part of the same sequence of deities that emerge onto the west wall from the chapel doorway (see Fig. 17). The organisational patterns that demarcate Amun's decorative unit are replicated across the hall, almost without exception. Thus, the subdivision of the second hypostyle hall into constituent decorative areas is a central feature of its decoration and structure. In a sense, it is not one hypostyle hall, but seven; a space of spaces.

### 3.2.3. Uneven Distributions: The Individual Agency of Goddesses across the Spaces of the Second Hypostyle Hall

Having established the morphology of the hall's decorative programme, it is now possible to observe how the individual agency of goddesses is represented within and between these decorative units, as well as how it is shaped by them.

Applying the typology of roles to the depicted goddess figures, individual agents and recipients are the most-attested group by a large margin, making up 83% of the images of female deities (see Chart 5). The proportion of goddesses either acting or receiving worship alone is far higher than in private tombs of either of the study's samples, with individual agents constituting a median average of 29% of goddess images in Theban monuments and 33% in Memphite examples. The increased rates of individual agency in the hypostyle hall lends weight to the previous suggestion that temple environments might

be conducive to goddesses being depicted as individual agents and recipients, due to the centrality of representing divine interactions to the content of temple decoration. It may be that the more deities (including goddesses) the king engages one on one, the more benefit he accrues.

Yet not all agency is depicted equal, certainly not in a visual system to which hierarchy is so fundamental. While most depictions of goddesses in the hall show their deity alone, the prominence of those goddess figures— the extent to which they occupy prestigious positions in the decorative programme— varies greatly. To take an analogy from the methods of statistical description used in this thesis, the distribution of prominence is unequal. Indeed, in most areas of the hall, goddesses occupy positions that are secondary within spatial hierarchies, and function to supplement the presence of the primary deity of the decorative unit in which their images appear. For example, as noted above, Mut is depicted breast feeding the king immediately to the south of the entrance to the Amun-Ra chapel (PM VI, 9; Calverley et al. 1958, pl. 23; David 2016, 69.V), a scene in which she is the only divinity and acts alone. However, the scene is part of Amun-Ra's decorative area and is one of the lower scenes that, in the pattern of demarcation seen across the hall, are usually occupied by associates of the resident deity. According to Robins, the lower registers of compositions are generally less prestigious than higher ones (1994, 36). Thus, the image of Mut is spatially secondary. Furthermore, her depiction is predicated on her ability to emphasise the presence of Amun-Ra. Similarly, since most of the chapels (and therefore their decorative units) are dedicated to gods, many of the goddesses depicted in the hall have individual agency, but they occupy a secondary position within the narrative of the space in which they appear.

There is, however, a sharp spike in goddesses' prominence towards the northern end of the hall, in the decorative unit associated with the chapel of Isis (the chapel itself is

discussed in the following chapter: see §4.3). Large images of the goddess emerge from the chapel into the upper section of the west wall, demarcating her area (PM VI, 9; Calverley et al. 1958, pl. 13, 16; David 2016, 69.8–11). It should, however, be noted that in the scene between her chapel and that of Horus, she engages in a simultaneous activity with her divine neighbour— bestowing years of reign upon Seti— and so is classed as a co-agent rather than individual. Looking to the columned area of Isis’ unit, the two rows of columns that line the approach to her chapel (2.A–C and 3.A–C: PM VI, 9; Calverley et al. 1958, pl. 66) are entirely decorated with scenes featuring female divinities. Most of the goddess figures on the six columns (at least 18 out of 24, since the western scene of 2.B is damaged: *ibid.*, pl. 68–9) are captioned as Isis or one of her forms, such as Shentayt ‘The Widow’ (Leitz 2002, VI, 105–6; Helck 1984, 580–1). On the east wall, Isis is depicted in the upper and lower scenes on either side of the door aligned with her chapel entrance (Calverley et al. 1958, pl. 50–1; David 2016, 69.VEb–VIIEb, 107–8), as are almost all of the other resident deities within their respective decorative units. Therefore, in Isis’ decorative unit, the agency of goddesses is both individual and highly prominent.

Yet while divine female agency is central to the decoration of this area, it is not on account of Isis’ gender. She is represented in the same manner as any other resident deity, there being nothing about her depictions that is markedly different to those of Horus or Osiris in the neighbouring decorative units, outside of the different iconographies of each deity. The only variance in Isis’ decorative unit that could result from on gender is that gods are entirely absent from her columns while goddesses are still present on the columns of the gods’ decorative units. The absence of male deities from an area dedicated to a goddess recalls patterns noted by Robins and by Ann Macy Roth, in which men are often omitted from scenes or entire monuments if women, particularly their wives, occupy prominent positions or are themselves the owners, since hierarchies of representation

would in most cases lead to the male figures usurping primary positions (Robins 1994, 33–40; Roth 1999, 45–52). Similarly, the absence of gods from Isis’ columns might maintain Isis’ position as the most prominent and high-status figure within her decorative area, an adjustment that would relate to her gender. In all other respects, the prominence of female agency in Isis’ decorative unit is not an exception to the secondary position held by individual agents across the hall, but rather a continuation of standard modes of representation among the deities who occupy the seven chapels and dominate the associated decorative units.

#### 3.2.4. Peripherality as Possibility: Two Unexpected Goddesses on the East Wall

While the Isis area may not represent an exception to the treatment of individual agency among the hall’s goddesses, an exception does seem to occur on the east wall, in the form of two goddesses whose presence is anomalous within the patterning of figures in the scenes of that area. This adjustment in decorative organisation likely serves to support the position of Seti I as a recipient of cult, and it is suggested that the capacity of goddesses to fulfil this function might actually be enabled by their secondary position in hierarchies of agency.

The two unexpected figures appear on the section of the east wall between the exits aligned to the chapels of Ptah and Seti (PM VI, 7; Calverley et al. 1958, pl. 44; David 2016, 69.IEb-IIEb, 101–2; see Fig. 20), in the upper and lower scenes nearest the Seti doorway. The topmost figure is an image of Mut, sitting on a throne as is standard for deities depicted in the east wall’s upper register (see §3.2.2). She faces outward through the door into the first hypostyle hall, bestowing the figure of Seti opposite with jubilee symbols. Beneath her in the lower register is the standing figure of Sekhmet, who also faces out of the door whilst raising two cobra staves to the king opposite, the cobra on one

staff wearing the Red Crown and the other wearing the White. Seti stands facing Sekhmet, holding an *ankh* and a crook in one hand while keeping the other hand raised. The goddesses occupy positions that, elsewhere on the east wall, are reserved for the occupant of the associated chapel, yet neither are resident in the associated shrine, which belongs to Seti himself. The area therefore represents an exception to two patterns; it is an adjustment to the spatial organisation of figures on the east wall, and also to the generally secondary position of female agency in much of the hall, since the two goddesses occupy highly prominent and prestigious positions within the decorative programme.

The function of this adjustment is suggested by the appearance of Seti within the same scenes, as well as the position of the images within the space. Elsewhere on the east wall, the king is shown making offerings to the depicted deities, and in the upper scenes he does so whilst kneeling before the seated god or goddess, while in the lower scenes he stands in front of the standing figure of the deity (see §3.2.2). However, here on the section of the east wall that is contained within Seti's own decorative unit, the king is depicted differently. In the upper scene, rather than kneeling, Seti sits on a throne facing Mut, in a manner reminiscent of her own depiction, as well as that of all the resident deities who appear in analogous parts of the east wall (see Fig. 20). He does not offer to the goddess, but is himself a recipient, accepting jubilee symbols with an outstretched hand. Similarly, in the lower scene, Seti does not make offerings to Sekhmet, but stands in front of her with his hand raised, perhaps a gesture of acceptance or acknowledgment as she holds the two cobra staffs before him.

The king is depicted in poses and conducting actions that echo the chapel residents depicted in the other scenes of the east wall. The introduction of the two unexpected goddesses into the positions otherwise reserved for the chapel occupant, together with the rendering of Seti's figure, can therefore be understood as a method of presenting the king

as the owner of the chapel without disrupting the organisational scheme of the east wall. Seti is the resident of the associated chapel, yet the structuring of scenes in this area require that the king be depicted making offerings to the chapel's deity, and he cannot worship himself (something that does not seem to have been an issue for his son Ramesses; see §3.3.2). Thus, the two goddess figures occupy the positions that should be filled by Seti, whose own figures are rendered in such a way as to indicate that he is in fact the resident of the chapel. Such an interpretation is supported by another slight shift in patterns within Seti's decorative unit, namely in the large upper scene between the entrances of the Seti and Ptah chapels on the west wall. The king is depicted standing on the left/south side of the scene, offering bouquets of flowers to Ptah who stands within a shrine in the centre of the scene, behind which stands Sekhmet on the right/north side (PM VI, 8; Calverley et al. 1958, pl. 30, David 2016, 69.X, 81; see Fig. 21). The pattern observable in other such scenes on the west wall is as follows: three figures are present, one of which is the king, while the figures on the left and right sides of the composition are the resident deities of the chapels to which they are nearest. Through the addition of Sekhmet— who is also depicted in the lower scene to the north of Ptah's chapel entrance (PM VI, 28; Calverley et al. 1958, pl. 26; David 2016, 69.IX), and appears alongside Ptah on the south wall of the chapel interior (PM VI, 12; Calverley et al. 1935, pl. 26)— Seti is able to be present within the scene whilst also being the nearest figure to his own shrine. In this manner, the organisation of the wall's decoration can be maintained whilst also presenting Seti as the recipient of cult within his chapel. The adjustment on the east wall, which uses the two goddesses to stand in for Seti, is likely intended to achieve the same ends.

A question arises from these observations: what makes the two goddesses suitable for this strategic adjustment of patterns? One likely reason is they are both associated with

kingship, and are thus appropriate candidates to take Seti's place in the areas of the scenes usually occupied by a chapel occupant. Mut's connection to kingship is well-attested in Ramessid material, for instance in a hymn on the 20<sup>th</sup> Dynasty 'Crossword Stela' (BM EA 194: PM II<sup>2</sup>, 270) that identifies her with the royal uraeus and with the throne itself (*KRI* VI, 308 col. 7, 291.14.; Troy 1997, 302–3). Mut's associations with kingship appear to be operational here on the east wall, where she bestows the king with jubilee symbols and says in her caption 'I have given to you hundreds of thousands of years of life, stability, and power, so that you may carry out very many jubilees like your father Tatenen' (Calverley et al. 1958, pl. 44). The goddess in the lower scene can also be connected to ideas of kingship, through her identification and her actions. She is given the primary identification of 'Sekhmet the Great (*ʿ3t*, not *wrt*), Beloved of Ptah, Lady of the Sky', yet is also given the secondary name of 'Weret-Hekau in the Midst of the Enclosure of Menmaatra (Seti I)' (PM VI, 7; Calverley et al. 1958, pl. 44). As discussed in the previous chapter (see §2.3.3–4), Weret-Hekau is part of the fluid group of 'Eye of Ra' goddesses of which Sekhmet is also a member, and she is also associated with the royal uraeus. These connections are resonant in her actions within the scene, where she holds two cobra staffs before the king, saying 'take the Upper Egyptian crown and Lower Egyptian crown, established upon your head for eternity' (Calverley et al. 1958, pl. 44). The two goddesses who stand in for Seti on the east wall can therefore be connected to ideas of kingship, making them highly suitable for this function.

The goddesses might also function to centre the king within his decorative unit through their simultaneous association with both Seti and Ptah, the main deity of the neighbouring unit. The figure of Mut in the upper register is given the epithet 'Foremost in the Domain of Ptah' (Calverley et al. 1958, pl. 44), and in the lower register Sekhmet is described as 'Beloved of Ptah' (*ibid.*; see above). The association of the goddesses with

Ptah seems meaningful when considered alongside their spatial positioning. Ptah is the central deity of the adjacent decorative unit, and so he is depicted on this same wall space that marks the border between his area and that of Seti. Due to the organisation of scenes on the east wall that is used to delineate decorative units, two images of Ptah appear on the other side of the central dividing line, back to back with Mut and Sekhmet (see Fig. 20). Meanwhile, Seti's full birth name is Seti Merenptah, or 'Seti Beloved of Ptah', which is recorded in the captions accompanying the images of him that occur alongside Mut and Sekhmet (Calverley et al. 1958, pl. 44). The two goddesses might therefore be associable with both Seti and Ptah, and thus with both decorative units. Their images are positioned in the bounds of Seti's area and interact with him within it, furthermore the goddesses have associations with kingship and their epithets echo Seti's own name. At the same time, their epithets explicitly connect the goddesses to Ptah whilst they are positioned in close physical proximity to him. The two goddess figures might thus materialise the interconnection between Seti and Ptah. In doing so, they may be viewed as part of Ptah's decorative unit in addition to Seti's. Seti's position as a recipient of cult is therefore supported by an impression that he is the sole occupant of his decorative area, whose figures are rendered in a similar manner to those of the other chapel occupants. All of this occurs within the parameters of wall's organisational scheme.

The final aspect to consider is why two goddesses are used for this purpose in the first place. Of the manifold combinations of gods and goddesses who may have been chosen to occupy the chapel resident's spot on this part of the wall, two female deities were chosen. We might wonder whether there something about goddesses and their agency that makes them especially suited to the task. By summarising the functions required of these figures in the area's strategy of adjustment, whilst also bearing in mind gendered hierarchies of prominence, a suggestion can be formulated. The figures chosen to deputise

for the king must be associated with both Seti and Ptah, so that they might be appropriate both as scene partners for Seti and as inhabitants of Ptah's decorative area, thereby centring the king as a recipient of cult. Furthermore, given their occupation of spaces usually reserved for the chapel resident, the figures must be prominent within their scenes. However, they cannot overshadow Seti entirely, and must also be of lower status than Ptah so as not to decentralise him as the focal figure in his decorative area. In short, they must have prominent individual agency *and* secondary status.

Gods would likely find it difficult to fulfil such seemingly contradictory requirements. Male deities occupy the topmost position in the cosmic hierarchy, as indicated by sources such as *the Onomasticon of Amenemope* and the frequent depiction of gods in the most prestigious positions in decorative programmes, here in Seti's temple and throughout this study's corpus. Gods have higher levels of what might be termed 'compositional conservatism', since they are male beings within an androcentric cultural and representational system. If males are systematically treated as primary subjects, then representational norms (and other sociocultural frameworks) are likely to coalesce with the maleness of central figures as the default, a base premise upon which the structures of the artistic system are built. However, equating male beings (including gods) with high status and centrality results in a furtiveness or fragility in their representation; nothing that might threaten their status can be tolerated. As a result, gods have high levels of compositional conservatism, meaning that their images are routinely rendered and spatially positioned in ways that maintain their primacy, and strategies can be put in place to mediate contextual secondariness or assert their position within groups. The idea of compositional conservatism is returned to over the course of the coming chapters.

For a god, the demands of the east wall's strategy of adjustment— to be both prominent and secondary— is a contradiction in terms. This is not the case for a goddess.

Throughout the hall, female deities appear as individual agents and recipients of worship whilst also occupying secondary positions in the organisational scheme. Goddesses' individual agency largely serves to support the demarcation of the hall's constituent spaces, through the association of depicted figures with the chapels and their occupants. A sense of this status is even preserved in Isis' decorative unit, where goddesses dominate; the absence of gods from the column scenes may well function to preserve Isis' position as the focal deity of the area. However, if a secondary position in relation to gods is an inherent aspect of goddesses' agency, then two goddesses can occupy the relevant spaces on the east wall without overshadowing Seti or displacing Ptah. Indeed, goddesses may be the only beings able to do so. The depiction of Mut and Sekhmet might therefore demonstrate that while goddesses— whose female nature places them at the periphery of androcentric representational norms— are broadly ranked lower than gods in hierarchies of representation, this secondary position may itself be a source of modes of agency not seen or even possible among gods. For those who cannot occupy the centre, there is possibility in the periphery.

### 3.3. Perspectives on Prominence in the Small Temple at Abu Simbel

#### 3.3.1. A Home for Hathor in Nubia: The Small Temple at Abu Simbel

The twin rock-cut temples of Abu Simbel are located on the south-western shore of Lake Nasser, south of modern Kurusku, near what was once the second cataract of the Nile (PM VII, 95–119, Map I; Baines and Málek 1984, 179, 184–5). The Small Temple (see Plan 7) is the northernmost of the two, with the Great Temple located nearby to the southwest (PM VII, 112). The temples were built by Ramesses II, and are among the most widely-known works of that king in the public consciousness. The temples were reintroduced to Europeans in 1813 by Johann Ludwig Burckhardt and explored by the famed Giovanni

Belzoni (Willeitner 2010, 11–28), yet popular awareness of them among modern audiences may be largely due to the ground-breaking UNESCO rescue mission that saved the temples from the rising waters of Lake Nasser in the early 1960s (Säve-Söderbergh 1987, 98–126). The scenes and texts of the Small Temple are published in two volumes by Christiane Desroches-Noblecourt and Charles Kuentz (1968, the authors hereafter abbreviated to ‘DK’ in citations). The work is used as the primary reference source for the following analyses, yet its interpretations of the monument are not accepted uncritically, as will be discussed shortly.

The Small Temple is dedicated to Hathor of Ibshek (Faras: Leitz 2002, I, 214), as indicated by the captions that accompany the rock-hewn cult statue in its sanctuary (PM VII, 116–7; *KRI* II, 771.6; see §3.3.2). The monument is also given over to queen Nefertari in dedicatory inscriptions on the façade and on the ceiling of the hypostyle hall (PM VII, 111–4; *KRI* II, 765.11–6, 769.2–4; see §3.3.2). The nearby Great Temple is dedicated to Ra-Horakhty and, through strategies of identification with that god, to Ramesses himself (Habachi 1969, 4–10; Ullmann 2016, 167–8). According to Martina Ullmann, work on the monuments probably began in the first years of Ramesses’ reign, immediately after he completed the smaller rock-cut temple at Beit el-Wali (PM VII, 21–7) whose planning and construction was probably begun by Seti I (Ullmann 2016, 156).

Before progressing with the analysis of gendered agency in the Small Temple, it is appropriate to make a note of issues surrounding scholarly interpretations of the temple’s function, and the ways in which these have (or rather have not) affected the engagement with the monument in this study. In an extended essay towards the end of their publication’s first volume, Desroches-Noblecourt and Kuentz postulate that, given the proximity of the Abu Simbel temples to the Nile and the second cataract, the function of the Small Temple is to identify Nefertari with Hathor and therefore, through mythical

connections to the ‘distant goddess’, with the star Sothis/Sirius whose rising they link to the coming of the inundation. Through this identification, they argue, the queen ensures the continued flooding of the Nile and the rejuvenation of Egypt downstream (DK 1968, I, 109–24). The interpretation of the Small Temple as a Sothic flood generator has been carried through the wider literature, being followed by Joachim Willeitner (1994, 68, 79) and others.

It is indeed possible that associations with the Nile and the inundation were operative within the monument, and at Abu Simbel as wider complex. Willeitner notes that if the axes of the Great and Small Temples are extended outwards from their façades, they would have converged on the Nile (Willeitner 1994, 66), and a scene in the Small Temple itself shows Nefertari offering to the triad of Elephantine (PM VII, 116; DK 1968, II, pl. 112, 114; see §3.3.2), a location associated with the emergence of the annual flood (Müller 2016, 216). However, the centrality of the flood to the Small Temple’s function has likely been overstated. The scene depicting Nefertari with the triad of Elephantine occurs on the side of a wall that falls north of the temple’s main axis, while a similar scene showing the king offering to three Nubian forms of Horus (PM VII, DK 1968, II, pl. 104, 106; see §3.3.2) appears on the southern half of that same wall. Willeitner notes that the temple’s decoration can be divided into north and south halves, the northern surfaces carrying images of deities associated with northern regions and the same with southern surfaces and southern deities (1994, 74–5), a known organisational technique of temple decoration (e.g. Derchain 1962, 32–5; Wilson 2010, 794–9). In the context of this decorative pattern within the Small Temple, the associations expressed by Nefertari’s interaction with the deities of Elephantine may be more geographical than aquatic. Furthermore, in Amanda-Alice Maravelia and M. A. Mosalam Shaltout’s analysis of the astronomical alignments of the Abu Simbel temples, the authors follow Desroches-Noblecourt and Kuentz’s interpretation

of the Sothic function of the Small Temple whilst also showing that the temple has no significant relationship to the rising of Sothis/Sirius, nor to any solar event (Maravelia and Shaltout 2003, 12–3). While Willeitner argues that the temple is instead aligned to the rising of Alpha Centauri at the end of the inundation and beginning of the sowing season (1994, 79), such an alignment (if indeed present and meaningful) would imply a different function than ensuring the flood comes in the first place. As already noted, associations with the annual inundation may well be present in the Small Temple, yet it seems likely that any such connections have been overemphasised. Therefore, while the present study uses Desroches-Noblecourt and Kuentz's publication of the temple for its comprehensive documentation of the monument's decorative programme, it does not incorporate their interpretation of the temple as a guarantor of the annual flood.

### 3.3.2. Description of the Temple

In order to discuss the representation and construction of female agency within the temple's decoration, some of the monument's key features must be outlined in a manner that gives a sense of the floor plan; the following analyses draw heavily upon the positioning of the temple's scenes and the spatial relationships between them. A description of the temple is provided below, following the progress of a hypothetical visitor through from the entrance to the sanctuary.

Standing before the Small Temple, one is faced by a monumental façade of six standing colossi hewn from the rock face, three on either side of the entrance doorway, each with two smaller rock-hewn statues of children standing beside it (PM VII, 111–3; DK 1968, II, pl. 10–20; see Fig. 22). Four of the colossi are figures of Ramesses, and two are of Nefertari. Both sculptures of the queen show her with her left foot slightly forward, her left arm folded over her chest as she clutches a sistrum. She is shown wearing a crown

of two cow horns, a sun disk, and two tall feather plumes. All four statues of Ramesses show him striding forward with his left foot and holding his arms down straight at his sides. In each he wears a different crown, these being (from left to right): the red crown, the white crown, the double crown, and the *atef* crown. Each grouping of a colossus and its two child statues is separated from the next by an encircling border of dedicatory inscriptions, whose large hieroglyphs record the names and titles of Ramesses and Nefertari. Above the entrance doorway is a large lintel, carrying two symmetrically opposed scenes of Ramesses making offerings before a seated god (PM VII, 113; DK 1968, II, pl. 21–2; Fig. 23). The king offers to Amun-Ra on the left side of the lintel, and on the right to Horus Lord of Miam (Aniba: Leitz 2002, III, 240).

Proceeding through the entrance doorway, one enters a short portico. To the left, on the south wall, Ramesses is depicted offering flowers to Hathor, while to the right on the north wall Nefertari offers flowers to Isis (PM VII, 113; DK 1968, II, pl. 24–7). The portico opens out into the hypostyle hall, which contains two rows of three pillars, one row running either side of the central axis of the temple (PM VII, 113–5; DK 1968, II, pl. 28). The north and south walls of the hall are decorated with offering scenes before assorted deities, with one exception: a coronation scene on the south wall depicts Ramesses stood between Horus and Seth, who secure the double crown on the king's head whilst also holding *renpet* palm fronds (PM VII, 113; DK 1968, II, pl. 41–2). The east wall also presents exceptions to the offering scenes in the rest of the hall. The east wall is the internal side of the temple's façade, and functions as an inverted pylon by carrying two smiting scenes, one on either side of the entrance doorway (PM VII, 113; DK 1968, I, 49–51; II, pl. 32–38; see Fig. 24). On the north side of the wall (to the left of the door), Neferati stands behind Ramesses, ready to slay a captive Asiatic in front of Horus of Meha (Abu Simbel: Leitz 2002, III, 649) who stands with his back to the doorway. The scene on

the south side (to the right of the door) is very similar, except the captive is a Nubian instead of an Asiatic, and the presiding god whose back is against the doorway is Amun-Ra, Lord of the Thrones of the Two Lands.

Moving along the temple's axis, down through the hypostyle hall, one is flanked by the two rows of pillars, and is faced on both sides by images of Hathor-headed naos sistra (PM VII, 114–5; DK 1968, II, pl. 29, 60–1, 63–4). The axis-facing surface of each pillar is entirely occupied by a depiction of a sistrum, each of which is inscribed with the name of a different goddess on its handle, these being Anuket, Hathor, Isis, Mut, Satet, and Weret-Hekau (*KRI* II, 769.6; DK 1968, I, 67–76; II, pl. 60, 63). The other three faces of the pillars carry images of gods, goddesses, and of the royal couple. Each section of ceiling between the pillars is inscribed with a cartouche, alternating between that of Ramesses and of Nefertari (PM VII, 115; DK 1968, I, 66, 78; II, pl. 86–9). In the centre of the ceiling overhead, marking the axis of the temple, is a dedicatory inscription in which Ramesses states that he built the monument for Nefertari (PM VII, 114; *KRI* II, 769.2–4; DK 1968, I, 66, 79–80; II, pl. 90).

Having passed along the columns one reaches the west wall, containing three doors into the vestibule beyond, the main doorway being positioned on the central axis and the other two located at the northern and southern extremes of the wall. The central doorway is flanked by two scenes of Nefertari making offerings to a goddess who is seated with her back to the portal; to the left of the door, the recipient goddess is Hathor, while in the scene to the right of the door the queen offers to Mut (PM VII, 114; DK 1968, II, pl. 47–8, 57–8). The jambs of the door itself are inscribed with images of the king, who wears the white crown on the left/south jamb and the red crown on the right/north, and holds a staff and mace whilst making recitations requesting entry into the inner areas of the temple (PM VII, 115; DK 1968, II, pl. 91–2). The secondary doors at the northern and southern ends of

the wall carry the names and titles of Ramesses on their jambs, while the lintels are inscribed with three registers; the topmost contains a *bḥdty* sun disk, the middle holds the names of Ramesses, and the lowest is inscribed with the name and titles of Nefertari (PM VII, 115; DK 1968, II, pl. 93–6, see Fig. 25).

Proceeding through the central doorway, one enters the transverse vestibule, with its two small unfinished side chambers at the north and south ends. The east wall of the vestibule, back towards the hypostyle hall, is dominated by two scenes, occupying the surfaces between the central doorway and the two other doors further along to the north and south. The northern scene depicts Ramesses offering flowers and Neferari holding a sistrum before the seated figure of Taweret, who is shown in human form (PM VII, 115–6; DK 1968, II, pl. 98). The southern scene on the east wall is another coronation scene, yet instead of Ramesses, it is Nefertari being crowned (PM VII, 116; DK 1968, II, pl. 98; see Fig. 26). The queen stands wearing the same horned and plumed crown as she does in her colossi on the temple façade, yet also holds a fly swat across her chest, an *ankh* in her downward-held right hand, and Hathor and Isis stand either side of her securing her crown. According to Willeitner, this scene is unparalleled (2010, 128). Above the doors at the northern and southern ends of the wall, Nefertari's name is inscribed in a cartouche topped by a sun disk and plumes, flanked on both sides by vultures wearing *atef* crowns and carrying flails (PM VII, 116; DK 1968, II, pl. 93–6; see Fig. 27).

The west wall of the vestibule contains the doorway into the sanctuary, which is flanked by two sets of offering scenes, each made up of a larger scene that is nearest the door and a smaller scene that is further away from it. In the large scenes, the king making offerings to a seated god, who sits with his back to the chapel door, and the smaller scenes depict their offering maker in front of seated deities (PM VII, 116). To the left of the chapel door, the larger scene depicts Ramesses offering wine to Amun-Ra, while the

smaller scene shows him presenting flowers to three localised forms of Horus (DK 1968, II, pl. 104, 106). To the right of the door, Ramesses offers wine to Ra-Horakhty, while the smaller offering (already cited regarding ideas that link the temple to the inundation: see §3.3.1) scene shows Nefertari offering flowers to Khnum, Satet, and Anuket (ibid., pl. 112, 114). As with the doorway into the vestibule, the jambs of the sanctuary door carry images of the king (PM VII, 116; DK 1968, II, pl. 115–6), and as with the temple’s external entrance the lintel is inscribed with a double offering scene (ibid.; see Fig. 28). Here the king is the primary officiant in both scenes, yet unlike on the entrance doorway he is accompanied by Nefertari, who raises flowers in each hand. The recipients of the offerings are Hathor in the left-hand scene and Mut in the right, both of whom sit toward the centre of the lintel with their backs against a vertical register of text that divides the two scenes. The register contains the names and titles of Nefertari, which are also inscribed in a register above the flared cornice of the doorway, emanating outwards from a central *ankh* sign.

Moving through the doorway, one enters the sanctuary. The east wall through which one has progressed carries two roughly incised images of fecundity figures, one on either side of the doorway, each carrying a tray laden with produce (PM VII, 116; DK 1968, II, pl. 117; Fig. 29). Following Baines’ understanding of such figures as iconographic personifications (1985, 37–41, 83–111), the two fecundity figures have not been included among the divine figures (i.e. representations of divine presence) in the sanctuary. Running along the top of the wall is a large register of text containing the name and titles of Nefertari. The south wall carries a scene in which Nefertari censes and plays a sistrum before the seated figures of Mut and Hathor (PM VII, 116; DK 1968, II, pl. 119–20; Fig. 30). On the north wall opposite, Ramesses is depicted censing and pouring a libation before another pair of seated deities, these being the deified forms of himself and

Nefertari (PM VII, 116; DK 1968, II, pl. 121–2). Finally, turning to the west wall, a worn rock-hewn statue of the Hathor cow (with a smaller figure of the king beneath her chin) appears in a niche between two Hathor-headed columns (PM VII, 116–7; DK 1968, II, pl. 123–5; see Fig. 31). The niche is positioned slightly to the north of the wall's centre, leaving a negative space on the south side of the wall that is occupied by an image of the king, who faces toward the statue niche whilst offering flowers.

### 3.3.3. Female Prominence and Male Primacy

From the description above, Hathor clearly occupies a prominent position in the temple's decoration, something to be expected since the monument is dedicated to her. Goddesses associated with Hathor are also frequently featured, principal among these being Mut, who appears as a visual counterpoint to Hathor in several areas; in the hypostyle hall on either side of the doorway into the vestibule, on the lintel of the sanctuary entrance, and on the chapel's north wall where the two goddesses are both worshiped by Nefertari. A close interconnection between these goddesses is attested from the early New Kingdom, as demonstrated by Betsy Bryan in her investigation of Hathoric festivals of drunkenness in the Mut precinct at Karnak (2014, 93–111), thus her presence in the temple is appropriate.

The prominence of goddesses in the temple is borne out by statistical evaluations of its decoration. 63 divine figures are observable in the temple, 38 of which (60%) are female, while 25 (40%) are male (see Chart 6). The predominance of goddesses over gods is likely due to centrality of Hathor to the narrative of the space, just as Isis predominates in the areas of Abydos' second hypostyle hall that pertain to the chapel of Isis (see §3.2.3), although the discrepancy between female and male presence is not so pronounced here at Abu Simbel. Furthermore, goddesses appear to become broadly more prominent as one moves through the temple toward the chapel. If the external entrance doorway and portico

are counted together, then goddess figures account for half of the divine images in that area (see Chart 7); the figures of Amun-Ra and Horus on the external lintel are smaller than those of Hathor and Isis in the portico, yet are the first images of deities encountered by somebody entering the temple, forming a vanguard to the two goddesses beyond. In the hypostyle hall, however, goddesses account for 21 out of the 37 divine figures in the space (57%), a roughly equal proportion of divine images that goddesses make up in the vestibule beyond, this being 7 out of 13 (54%). Finally, in the chapel where Hathor herself resides within her cult statue, goddesses constitute 89% of divine figures. Not only are goddesses prominent in the temple's decorative programme, but the application of the proposed typology of roles reveals that they are overwhelmingly depicted as individual agents or recipients, with 82% of goddess figures in the temple falling into this category (see Chart 8).

The centrality of divine female agency, particularly individual agency, in the temple's decoration goes hand in hand with an increased presence and activeness of women, through the figure of queen Nefertari. Royal women are rarely depicted in temple scenes in this period, rarer still as ritual officiants— queen Tuya does not make offerings alongside Seti I in the many ritual scenes at Abydos— yet at Abu Simbel Nefertari appears throughout the decorative programme, and on multiple occasions is alone as a conductor or participant in ritual. Almost all two-dimensional representations of humans in the Small Temple depict Nefertari and Ramesses, the only exceptions being the captive Asiatic and Nubian in the smiting scenes on the east wall of the hypostyle hall (see §3.3.2).

Focusing on these two-dimensional depictions, and therefore excluding the colossi of the façade, the temple contains 35 images of the king and queen (the seated figures of Ramesses and Nefertari on the north wall of the sanctuary have been counted among divine images; see §3.3.2). Of these, 17 (49%) depict Nefertari, and 18 (51%) depict

Ramesses (see Chart 9). Looking to the contexts in which these figures appear, Nefertari appears alone as a sole officiant or participant in ritual in 12 (71%) of her images, and together with Ramesses in 5 (29%: see Chart 10). As must follow, Ramesses also appears in a couple with Nefertari on 5 occasions (28% of his images), and he is shown alone in 13 scenes (72%: see Chart 10). Therefore, not only does the Small Temple feature a queen as a participant in the depicted ritual activity, but in number of appearances and the nature of her agency within those appearances, Nefertari is essentially equal to Ramesses. A parity between the king and queen is also communicated through the spatial relationships that exist between some of their images, whether in the portico where Ramesses offers to Hathor on the south wall and Nefertari offers to Isis on the north, or in the sanctuary where Nefertari offers to Hathor and Mut on the south wall while Ramesses worships himself and the queen on the north (see §3.3.2). The similarity in the content of these scenes, and their mirroring of each other through spatial positioning, constructs an equivalency between Nefertari and Ramesses that accords with Heather Lee McCarthy's interpretation of 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty queens as the female dimension of the totality of kingship (2008, 85).

It should be noted that the identified parity in the presence and agency of the royal couple is an unusual and likely intentional feature, and not simply a consequence of Nefertari's inclusion in the decorative programme. It is true that there are few if any parallels of Ramessid temple environments that feature royal women in the ritual scenes of the main cult areas. In such a wider context, however, depicting Nefertari on just a handful of occasions would be enough to break the mould. By representing her almost as frequently as the king, and with analogous levels of individual agency, the Small Temple is placing unprecedented emphasis on human female agency. To illustrate this point, one may return to the previously discussed example of TT 106 (see §2.3) and compare how the agency of human women is depicted in that monument. A private tomb is a very different

monumental setting to the Small Temple, whose decoration serves different ritual functions (as discussed earlier in this chapter), yet private tombs might nonetheless be the closest available points of comparison for the representation of female agency, since they frequently depict both men and women in their scenes. In the MMA photographs that record the decorative programme of TT 106, 151 human figures are identifiable, only 30 of which are female (21%: see Chart 11). There is a single example of a woman who appears alone as a sole worshiper (PM I:1<sup>2</sup>, 224; MMA Photo T2986), while 16 (53%) appear as part of a mixed-sex pair, and 13 (43%) are represented in mixed-sex groups (see Chart 12). Contrastingly, of the 121 male figures, 61 (50%) are represented alone, just 17 (14%) as part of a mixed-sex pair, 29 (24%) as part of a single-sex group or pair, and 14 (12%) as part of a mixed-sex group (see Chart 12). The treatment of female presence and agency within TT 106, and in many private tombs, is markedly different to that which can be observed in the Small Temple. Ramesses' dedicatory inscriptions on the façade and the ceiling of the hypostyle hall (*KRI* II, 765.11–6, 769.2–4; see §3.3.2) give the temple over to Nefertari. The dedication was not only in name; a concerted effort appears to have been made to feature Nefertari's presence and agency in the decorative programme, in a manner that stands in contrast to the treatment of female agency in much of the wider landscape of Egyptian visual media.

However, in an androcentric cultural system, even spaces of heightened female prominence exist within a wider context of male primacy, a sense of which appears to be preserved within the Small Temple despite its emphasis on goddesses and women. Firstly, while images of goddesses are more numerous in the temple than those of gods, depictions of male deities often occur in focal areas of the temple's decorative scheme, often dominating the surfaces where they do. As noted in the description of the temple's layout and decoration (see §3.3.2), the external doorway of the temple does not depict Hathor or

any of the goddesses associated with her, but Amun-Ra and Horus of Miam (see Fig. 23). When entering the vestibule, the doorway into the sanctuary— through which the cult statue of Hathor is visible— is dominated by the two large images of Amun-Ra and Ra-Horakhty, who sit with their backs to the door and visually subsume the glimpse of Hathor from the chapel beyond (see Fig. 32).

Similarly, while images of Nefertari are about as frequently attested as those of Ramesses, and her agency in those depictions is often active and individual, the king appears in some of the most focal and prestigious areas of the temple. He is the sole donor of offerings to Amun and Horus on the lintel of the external doorway, as well as to the large images of Amun and Ra-Horakhty in the vestibule, and on the back wall of the sanctuary he appears alone in perhaps the most important act of cultic engagement in the entire temple; offering to the cult statue of the resident goddess. Furthermore, where Ramesses and Nefertari appear together, the king takes precedence over his wife, as demanded by the rules of compositional dominance that Robins identified in Egyptian art (1994, 33–4). Their hierarchical ordering is even maintained textually, as can be seen above the secondary doorways into the vestibule (see Fig. 25). The panels that contain the names and titles of Ramesses and Nefertari are organised as registers, of equal size and the same textual layout, yet one atop the other. The king and queen therefore have comparable textual representation, yet through spatial ordering Ramesses is literally placed higher than Nefertari. The queen may enjoy a certain parity with Ramesses, the two making up a greater unity of kingship, yet their relationship is not one of equality. The distribution of images and texts indicates that there is a senior and a junior partner, an impression that begins to form even before one enters the temple; while the colossi of Nefertari are the same size as those of Ramesses, a feature that is frequently highlighted in popular discussions of the monuments, there are nonetheless only two of her, while there are four

of him (see Fig. 22). The two are comparable, yet the queen's presence is ultimately subsumed by and secondary to the king's, just as the prominence of goddesses and their agency does not supplant the primacy of gods.

### 3.3.4. Reconciling Priorities: 'Perspective' as an Organising Principle in the Small Temple

It has been shown that the Small Temple at Abu Simbel is a space of female prominence. Yet through the preservation of male primacy, it is also a space of tensions. Hathor is the temple's resident deity, and so should appear at the most focal and prestigious places in its decoration. Indeed, in some areas she does: the chapel, the lintel of the chapel door, on the pillars of the hypostyle hall, and so on. She does not, however, in others. The same might be said of Nefertari, the temple's nominal owner, who does feature prominently in some scenes— those where she worships alone, or where she is crowned in the vestibule— yet elsewhere she is either secondary to the king, or entirely absent. Female prominence and male primacy are two representational priorities held simultaneously within the temple's decoration. At first, the scenes that articulate and serve these priorities may appear to function in opposition to one another, like pages of two different stories scattered haphazardly through the monument. However, closer examination suggests that the organisation of these scenes is not haphazard at all. Instead, they may in fact be organised using a form of spatial patterning that serves to accommodate the multiple priorities of the decorative programme whilst minimising the tensions between them.

The term 'perspective' has been used to describe the proposed strategy, due to the association of that word with points of view, both in the literal sense of how one physically views something and in the figurative sense of how one conceptualises it. When noting the locations of the scenes and decorative features that support male primacy and those that

support the prominence of female agency, the former seem to be positioned in a way that makes them most obvious to someone moving through the temple from the outside, while the latter are grouped nearer the sanctuary and present themselves most easily to a viewer moving from that direction. Furthermore, the degree to which various elements are perceivable is also shaped by the structure of the space itself, particularly by the pillars of the hypostyle hall, which obscure and reveal different aspects of the decorative programme depending on how one moves through the temple. It is contended here that the interaction between the distribution of scenes and the physical morphology of the monument produces two experiential narratives for the space, both of which utilise the idea of movement along the temple's main axis. The following passages explore each of these experiential narratives through a hypothetical journey through the temple, just as the initial description of the monument was approached.

We might begin by distinguishing these two perspectives. The first, which begins from outside the temple and moves inwards along the axis toward the sanctuary, is hereafter called the 'external' perspective. The second, which begins inside the sanctuary and moves along the axis toward the entrance doorway of the façade, is called the 'internal' perspective. The external perspective is a spatial narrative of the temple that emphasises the primacy of gods, while simultaneously creating a parity between the king and queen. At the same time, however, the senior position of Ramesses within that partnership is asserted. It might even be understood as the normative perspective of the wider sociocultural reality beyond the temple, the way of seeing the temple that satisfies the demands of gender hierarchy and decorum. The internal perspective is that of the resident goddess herself and creates a zone of divine female prominence around the sanctuary, whilst also emphasising Nefertari within the unit of the royal couple. It is argued that the two perspectives also serve a transitional function between one another,

one that is achieved by incorporating the shifting demographics of divine figures as well as iconographic and spatial features. Having defined the elements of this proposed model, the reader will now move through the temple twice more, once from the external perspective and then from the internal. During this process the previously noted features of the decorative programme will be pointed out, demonstrating that in the context of the proposed perspectives these features do not represent conflicts between the temple's different representational priorities. Indeed, through the organisational model of the perspectives, these priorities are perhaps reconciled.

Moving inwards through the temple with the external perspective in mind, one notices first the colossi of the façade (see Fig. 22), in which the queen is comparable with Ramesses in size yet nonetheless outnumbered by him. Passing beneath the lintel of the outer doorway, that portrays two gods being worshipped by the king alone (see Fig. 23), one enters the portico, where Ramesses and Nefertari each worship a goddess, yet it is Ramesses who worships Hathor of Ibshek, the specific aspect of Hathor who is resident in the sanctuary beyond.

Entering the hypostyle hall and standing at its easternmost end, one sees along the axis and, through the doorways in the west of the hall and the vestibule, into the sanctuary itself (see Fig. 33). While the wall spaces either side of the door into the vestibule carry depictions of Nefertari offering to Hathor and Mut, who sit nearest the door and facing outwards from it, the two rows of columns almost entirely obscure the figures of Nefertari from view, leaving only the goddesses. Meanwhile, the image of the king can be seen on the jambs of the door into the vestibule, appearing to interact directly with the cult statue visible beyond. Remaining at the east end of the hall, but moving laterally to the south, one is faced by the southernmost of the two secondary doors into the vestibule. The lintel and jambs of the door appear to frame the smaller offering scenes on the vestibule's west wall

beyond, which depicts Ramesses presenting flowers to the three forms of Horus (DK 1968, II, pl. 93; see Fig. 34). The same occurs when looking through the northern door, which frames the small scene in which Nefertari offers to the triad of Elephantine (see Fig. 32), thus a parity is created between the king and the queen. However, while the lintels of the doorways that frame the scenes carry the names of both Nefertari and Ramesses, it is the king's that appears on top, preserving his primacy within the pairing. Returning to the central axis and moving down the hall, not only does one pass under the alternating cartouches of Ramesses and Nefertari on the ceiling between the pillars (see §3.3.1), passing Ramesses' coronation scene on the south wall in the process (see Fig. 26), but the Hathoric pillars with their inscribed goddess names file past on either side, so that one appears to accumulate markers of Hathoric presence. As this occurs, the two previously obscured figures of Nefertari on the west wall come into view, before finally passing through the central doorway into the vestibule.

Standing in the vestibule, one is faced by the sanctuary door and the offering scenes either side of it on the west wall. The cult statue is visible through the chapel door, yet it appears framed and subsumed by the two large images of Amun-Ra and Ra-Horakhty (see Fig. 32). Once again a parity is created between the king and queen, through the mirrored small offering scenes at the north and south ends of the wall. Nonetheless, the primacy of the king is maintained; he is the sole officiant in the large offering scenes, and occupies primary position where he and Nefertari appear on the lintel (see Fig. 28). However, in the same way as the presence of Hathor and the queen becomes more apparent as one follows the axis through the hypostyle hall, the arrangement of decoration on and above the lintel may begin to identify Nefertari with the goddess in the chapel beyond. The temple's axis makes contact with an *ankh* symbol above the lintel, from which the name and titles of Nefertari emanate to the left and right. Directly below the

ankh— drawing the axis down onto the lintel— is the vertical register of text containing the queen's name and titles. Seated figures of Hathor and Mut appear either side of the register, as if emerging out from it into their respective offering scenes, an arrangement that implies the queen's name might also be used to caption these two goddesses. A parallelism is drawn between them, perceptible as one enters the sanctuary where such an identification may have greatest potency.

The final station of the external perspective is the chapel. The dominance of Hathor within the space is communicated by her cult statue, and a parity is once again created between the king and queen by the parallelism of Ramesses' offering scene on the north wall and Nefertari's on the south. Nonetheless, Ramesses is still maintained as the senior partner in the relationship; from this perspective, one of the focal elements of the chapel's decoration is the image of the king on the back wall, worshipping the cult statue on his own (see Fig. 31). His primacy is further maintained in the scene on the north wall, where Ramesses offers to the deified forms of himself and Nefertari, a pairing in which the king occupies primary position, as is standard.

Thus, many of the temple's features that appear to foreground gods and male primacy can be contextualised within the spatial narrative of the external perspective. If one turns around and moves back down through the temple from the sanctuary, one experiences the decoration from the internal perspective, the viewpoint of Hathor herself that will be shown to centre goddesses and female prominence. Looking out from the statue niche, one faces the east wall of the sanctuary, which is dominated by the large register of text inscribed with the name and titles of Nefertari (see Fig. 29). While the offering scenes of the north and south walls still present the king and queen as a unit, the prominence of Nefertari's titulary within the space appears to emphasise her within that dynamic. It may also be significant that, in the pairing of the deified king and queen on the

north wall, what is a secondary position for Nefertari from the external perspective (seated behind Ramesses) makes her the nearest figure to the cult statue from the internal perspective. Indeed, since the southern offering scene depicts two goddesses and the queen, the deified Nefertari is the nearest figure on the north wall to Hathor's cult image, and the west wall is emblazoned with Nefertari's titulary, from this perspective the interaction between the human and deified forms of Ramesses on the north wall reads as an isolated pocket of male agency.

Moving out into the vestibule, the only visible deities are goddesses. Directly ahead, on either side of the central doorway into the hypostyle hall, are the scenes of Taweret being worshiped by Ramesses and Nefertari (see Fig. 35), and the unparalleled coronation scene in which the queen is crowned by Hathor and Isis (see Fig. 26). Above the doorways into the unfinished side chambers are small offering scenes depicting the Hathor cow in a skiff, the one above the south doorway featuring Nefertari as its officiant with Ramesses in the north (PM VII, 116; DK 1968, II, pl. 102–3, 110–1). The parallelism between the scenes above the side chambers once again presents the royal couple as complementary elements of a single unit, as does the scene where the two worship before Taweret. However, focus is drawn to the female aspect of that unit by the coronation scene, and furthermore by the framing of scenes through secondary doors at the northern and southern ends of the west wall. Standing in front of one these portals and looking through it, one sees down past the back of the Hathor pillars to the east wall of the hypostyle hall. The rows of pillars obscure the figures of Amun-Ra and Horus who overlook the smiting scenes, and from the secondary doorways of the vestibule appear to frame the figures of Ramesses and Nefertari (see Fig. 36). While both the king and queen are visible through the doors, their lintels are inscribed with Nefertari's cartouche (see Fig. 27), effectively captioning the visible section of scene with the queen's name.

Entering the hypostyle hall through the central doorway, one is faced first by the western faces of the two nearest pillars, which depict Isis and Weret-Hekau (PM VII, 115; DK 1968, II, pl. 75–6, 84–5; see Fig. 37). The name of each goddesses also appears on the sistrum handle of their respective pillar's Hathor-headed face (DK 1968, I, 72 C19.b, 74 C21.b [erroneously numbered, C23 elsewhere in publication]; II, pl. 60, 63), thus the depicted goddesses operate within the space as markers of Hathoric presence. Yet looking down along the axis, one is faced by the large figures of Amun-Ra and Horus on the east wall, framed by the rows of pillars which obscure the rest of the smiting scenes (see Fig. 24). They stand with their backs to the entrance, as if looking into the temple from the outside. It has already been noted that the form and decoration of the east wall resembles a pylon; the two gods are positioned in a way that, on a façade, would imply their residence within the building (e.g. Wilson 2010, 794–9). Similarly, the pylon imagery might be interpreted as turning the east wall into the ceremonial gateway of Amun-Ra and Horus' domain; the world outside of the temple. As one follows the axis down through the hall and towards that gateway, the female presence embodied in the images of Isis and Weret-Hekau on the westernmost pillars begins to dilute.

Passing these pillars, the western faces of the two middle pillars come into view, which carry images of a goddess on the southern pillar (Satet: PM VII, 114–5; DK 1968, II, pl. 71–2) and a god on the northern (Horus of Baki: PM VII, 115; DK 1968, II, 82–3; see Fig. 38). Moving forward once more, one reaches the final pair of pillars where, from the internal perspective, the presence of goddesses has almost entirely dissipated, as the western faces carry images of Horus of Buhen (PM VII, 114; DK 1968, II, pl. 69–70) and Horus of Miam (PM VII, 115; DK 1968, II, pl. 77–8; see Fig. 39) and one is now confronted by the large figures of Amun-Ra and Horus on the east wall.

Running simultaneously with the transition away from an emphasis on goddesses to a focus of gods is the reassertion of the primacy of the king within the royal couple. As one moves down through the hall, the alternating cartouches of Ramesses and Nefertari pass by overhead, Ramesses' coronation scene passes by on the south wall, and by the time one reaches the final pillars the king himself is coming into view in the smiting scenes. The figure of Nefertari who stands behind him is obscured by those same pillars; once again, female agency takes up its secondary position in preparation for the androcentric gender dynamics that predominate outside the Small Temple.

Through using the model of perspectives as an experiential method of contextualising the monument's decorative programme, two narratives appear to emerge from how the scenes are encountered within the space. One narrative foregrounds and maintains the primacy of gods, and presents the royal couple as a complementary partnership in which the king is the senior member, while also gently drawing female agency into focus as one moves toward Hathor's dwelling place in the sanctuary. The other narrative actively centres goddesses, and emphasises the role of Nefertari in the royal couple. It creates an area of female prominence in and around the sanctuary and turns the hypostyle hall into a transitional zone, in which the decorative emphasis on goddesses' presence and the centrality of the queen gradually shifts as one moves toward the entrance. By the time one reaches the door to the outside world, standard androcentric representational models have been re-established. Each of these narratives, or perspectives, serves one of the two priorities of the temple's decorative programme: that Hathor and her associated goddesses should be prominent, as should Nefertari as the monument's nominal owner (the internal perspective), at the same time as gods and the king should have primacy as dictated by hierarchical gender norms (the external perspective). The proposed organisational model of perspective therefore appears to contextualise various elements of

the Small Temple's decorative programme, producing a new and dynamic understanding of the monument and its treatment of female agency.

The two temple case studies from Abydos and Abu Simbel have built upon insights into the individual agency of goddesses gleaned from the tomb material. Temple decoration, due to its core function of creating and maintaining relationships with the divine, can be conducive to goddesses being depicted with individual agency, as indicated by the greater proportion of female divine images made up by individual agents in comparison to tomb contexts (see Charts 1–2, 5, 8). However, just as the individual agency of goddesses is often mediated in tomb decoration through their smaller numbers and depiction in lower registers and other less prestigious areas, the case studies of this chapter suggest that checks and balances exist on female deities even within their own spaces. In these settings, the individual agency and prominence of goddesses is bounded, hierarchically secondary, and negotiated. At Abydos, it exists as a representational priority only in the areas associated with Isis (and even here that priority can be flexible; see §4.3). Outside of these areas, goddess figures tend to occupy less prestigious positions in the decorative scheme, and primarily serve to illustrate the presence of whichever god is resident in the nearest chapel. At Abu Simbel, where the entire temple is given over to a goddess, strategies of spatial organisation are used to preserve the primacy of gods even within that space. And yet, as demonstrated by the two goddess figures who appear in Seti's area of the east wall of Abydos' second hypostyle hall, there is potential and possibility within secondary status. As females within an androcentric representational system, an effect of goddesses' secondariness is that they exist on the periphery of conventions, since the norm is not formulated with them in mind. As a result, the individual agency of goddesses can be represented in forms and functions that are probably inaccessible to gods, for whom the conventions that protect representational integrity seem

to be more strongly felt. The individual agency of goddesses may be restricted, but it is versatile.

## 4. Co-agents, Counterparts, and Supporters: The Forms and Functions of Pairing

### 4.1. Introduction to Chapter 4

The previous two chapters have considered the agency of goddesses in compositional settings where female deities appear as singular actors or recipients of worship. To focus entirely on these contexts would, however, ignore another commonly attested arrangement; where a goddess is depicted as one of a pair of divine figures. This chapter examines the agencies of goddesses within pairs, as well as the multiple representational processes that appear to be at work within pairing itself. Therefore, the following discussions have several aims and points of enquiry. The first is to consider how the roles of the proposed typology are used to create pairs, and the attestations of those roles in the data sets. The roles in question are kin and non-kin coagents, counterparts, and supporters. Secondly, the chapter considers the nature and functions of pairing as a phenomenon; what are the relationships that pairing expresses, and how might they be nuanced by the different roles that goddess figures assume in order to form these pairs? The third point of enquiry, building on the foundation of the previous chapters, is to examine the nature of goddesses' secondary status. The preceding case studies have already touched upon the lower position often attributed to goddesses in gendered hierarchies of representation. Norms of compositional dominance often place goddesses in less prestigious or seemingly passive positions when they appear in multi-gender pairings. Such contexts therefore provide a valuable opportunity to observe how goddesses might exercise agency within and through their secondary status, which in turn invites us to interrogate the nature of secondary status itself.

The first section of the chapter outlines three broad categories of relationship that are expressed through pairing— kin, thematic, and identity relationships— and then analyses the roles used to articulate those relationships, describing their varying attestations across the material (see §4.2). Through the application of quantitative method, patterns emerge in the regional and contextual use of pairing roles. The three types of pairing relationship are then examined using case studies, taken from across the thesis’ primary and secondary data sets. The expression of kin relationships is explored through the decoration of chapels in the Abydos temple of Seti I (see §4.3), where kin-based pairs appear to express aspects of a chapel resident’s persona. This wider representational strategy intersects with gender dynamics in the chapel of Isis, demonstrating the pervasiveness of goddesses’ secondary status yet also the representational opportunities that it might present. Thematic relationships are discussed using one of the votive stelae of Ramose (see §4.4). Manchester Museum 1759 depicts Maat and Ptah within a pairing, which is shown to be a highly localised motif within the Theban west bank, one that appears to evoke the landscape of the necropolis and, perhaps, communal belonging for members of the workers’ community at Deir el-Medina. A significant part of the motif’s proposed meaning is generated by Maat, in which her secondary position may in fact be vital. The final case study looks to the pairing of Taweret and Anuket in the burial chamber of Nakhtamun (TT 335) at Deir el-Medina (see §4.5). The scene participates in an organisational pattern that appears to identify them with Hathor. The relationship expressed by this pairing, and the method by which their figures are rendered, suggests that the multiplicity and fluidity exhibited in the Pillar H compositions of Chapter 2 are, in fact, a feature of goddesses’ representation more broadly. The overlapping of Taweret and Anuket is also shown to be an example of a form of representation that is largely restricted to goddesses, and likely stems from their position at the periphery of androcentric representational norms.

## 4.2. The Dynamics of Duality

### 4.2.1. Pairing and Relationships in Two-Dimensional Compositions

In surveying the forms and uses of pairing in the data sets, three broad yet non-exhaustive groupings suggest themselves. The first concerns pairs that express kin relationships, in which the depicted figures are connected to one another through vertical or lateral kinship, or else as consorts. An illustrative example, which demonstrates both kin-based and thematic pairing (thematic relationships are outlined below), is the exterior face of the painted wooden door of TT 1's burial chamber (JE 27303: PM I:1<sup>2</sup>, 1). The interior face of the door has already been discussed in relation to the function of Nut within that tomb (see §2.4.2). The lower register of the door's external face shows Isis stood behind the seated figure of Ptah-Sokar-Osiris, her arm held supportively around his shoulders (Bruyère 1959, 52, pl. 17.1; Haring 2006, 215 pl. 1; see Fig. 40). Isis' consort (and brother) was Osiris, who from the Middle Kingdom was included in an earlier syncretism of Ptah and Sokar (Smith 2017, 239–40). Isis' appearance alongside Ptah-Sokar-Osiris therefore expresses a kin relationship. Similar pairings are formed in temple contexts, often by depicting the resident deity alongside their family or consorts. In the wall scenes of Karnak's Great Hypostyle Hall, Mut appears as a counterpart to Amun-Ra on 19 identifiable occasions (Nelson 1981, pl. 1, 13–4, 29, 33, 39, 55, 58, 59, 89, 104, 131, 134, 161, 184, 187, 241, 247, 255), account for many of her depictions within the space. However, the pairing depicted in these 19 scenes is of a resident god and his consort; they conform to the standard gendered ordering of a male/husband followed by a female/wife, while also foregrounding the deity who is the focus of cult in the monument. Different dynamics might be present where a resident goddess is depicted with her consort, as will be discussed in relation to the chapel of Isis (see §4.3).

Returning to the painted door of TT 1, the upper register of the external face depicts a pairing that expresses a thematic relationship. The deities who appear in such pairs have a shared association with a certain context, concept, or place, but are not known to be consorts or to have a genealogical connection. In this example, Maat stands behind the seated figure of Osiris, holding her arm supportively around him (PM I:1<sup>2</sup>, 1; see Fig. 40). Maat is associated with Osiris through narratives of justification, since her figure is often present in the judgement scenes that he presides over (see Naville 1886, I, pl. 136). BD Spell 125 even names the venue of the weighing of the heart as ‘the Hall of the Two Maats’ (Lapp 2008, 5 pL1 a). However, Maat is not related to Osiris through kinship. Her pairing with him is on thematic grounds.

The term ‘identity relationships’ is used to characterise the third broad type of pairing. It describes a close intertwining of two deities’ personas, one that goes beyond relatedness or thematic connections. These arrangements seem to present the two figures as manifestations of one another, or of another associated deity. An example from the preceding chapter is the depiction of Mut and Hathor as a pair of counterparts in the Small Temple of Abu Simbel, on the south wall of the sanctuary (PM VII, 116; DK 1968, II, pl. 119–20; see Fig. 30). The pairing of these two goddesses echoes their close spatial association in other parts of the temple, such as on the lintel of the doorway into the sanctuary itself (PM VII, 116; DK 1968 II, pl. 116; see §3.3.2); the two goddesses are shown seated near the centre of the lintel in symmetrically opposed offering scenes (PM VII, 116; DK 1968 II, pl. 116). As noted in the original discussion of these scenes, Hathor and Mut were closely associated in the New Kingdom, seemingly to the point of blending into one another. The pairing of the two goddesses in the Small Temple’s sanctuary might therefore visualise the close intertwining of their identities seen in this temple and beyond.

Yet identity relationships are not only observable in temple contexts, where it may perhaps be expected that the various aspects of a deity are represented. Identity pairings also appear in private tomb decoration. An intriguing example from the Memphite corpus appears on a fragment from the tomb chapel of Mose, originally part of the east wall of the open court. The scene depicts a recumbent ram-headed sphinx wearing a double-plumed crown, and a winged eye whose talons clasp *ankh* and *was* symbols (PM III:2<sup>2</sup>, 554; Gaballa 1977, pl. 39; see Fig. 41). The sphinx is captioned as ‘Amun of the village of Neshi’ (translation Gaballa 1977, 17), and the eye as ‘Mut, Lady of the Sky’. The eye is therefore a goddess figure, one that assumes the role of a counterpart. The depiction of Mut as a winged eye is highly unusual. It may evoke her nature as one of the manifold ‘Eye of Ra’ goddesses, an epithet that is attested for Mut in this period (Leitz 2002, I, 426–29). Indeed, Mut’s solar associations are emphasised in the hymns of the 20<sup>th</sup> Dynasty ‘Crossword Stela’ that is cited in the previous chapter. The opening lines of the horizontal hymn describe the goddess as ‘great of sunlight, who illuminates [the entire land with] her rays. (She is) his eye, who causes the land to prosper, the glorious eye of Horakhty’ (*KRI* VI, 288.12–3; translation Stewart 1971, 90). The sphinx is named as Amun rather than Amun-Ra, yet Amun’s syncretism with the sun god was so ubiquitous in this period that his solar dimension would likely have been inherent in his representation, an impression that is perhaps reinforced here by the three sun disks featured on the sphinx’s crown. Mut not only takes a form that evokes her identification with the solar Eye, but does so in relation to a god whose solar connotations were central to his persona by the Ramessid period. The pairing of these figures might therefore visualise the closely entwined nature of their identities.

#### 4.2.2. It Takes Two, but Which Two? The Nuances and Attestations of Co-agents, Counterparts and Supporters

Having outlined the three broad categories of relationship that can be communicated by pairing, this section now describes the differing visual forms of the roles assumed by goddesses when forming those pairs, and provides quantitative analyses of their distributions in the data sets. The latter suggest regional patterns in the use of these roles, as well as correlations between the ritual function and focus of a space and the pairing roles that are used within it. These patterns, it is suggested, relate to the compositional nuances of pairing arrangements. These insights will inform the discussion of the case studies later in the chapter.

##### *Co-agents*

A goddess who is depicted as a co-agent is shown engaging in the same activity as another figure. The presented typology distinguishes between kin co-agents, whose are the kin or consort of the figure they are paired with, and non-kin co-agents, who are not related in these ways. Co-agents appear relatively rarely in the sample of Theban private tombs, and the proportion of goddess figures they make up is not consistent between monuments (see Table 1). Kin co-agents constitute a median average of 0% of a Theban tomb's goddess figures, and a mean average of 14% (see Chart 1). The difference between these averages indicates a negative skew; there is a range of values for the proportion of a tomb's goddess figures made up by kin co-agents, yet where they do appear, their attestations tend towards the higher end of that range. Co-agents are totally absent from the sample of Memphite tombs (see Table 2; Chart 2).

Most attestations of kin co-gents in the funerary material are in scenes depicting Isis and Nephthys. They are shown together in various compositional settings; tending

Osiris, praising the rising sun, and so on. Some of these depictions are recurrent motifs, such as a scene that depicts a booth in which Isis and Nephthys purify or protect the body of the deceased, who is tended by Anubis. The motif appears to be drawn from the vignette of BD Spell 151 (Naville 1886, I, pl. 173), and is attested in the painted burial complexes of six tombs at Deir el-Medina: TT 2 (PM I:1<sup>2</sup>, 8–9), TT 211 (ibid., 307), TT 218 (ibid., 320), TT 323 (ibid., 395), TT 335 (ibid., 403), and TT 336 (ibid., 405). Yet not all of Isis and Nephthys' recurrent settings are taken directly from the *Book of the Dead*. Looking once more to Deir el-Medina, five tombs—TT 2 (PM I:1<sup>2</sup>, 8–9), TT 5 (ibid., 13), TT 219 (ibid., 321), TT 335 (ibid., 403), and TT 359 (ibid., 422)—depict the goddesses as winged figures in the topmost sections of opposing walls. For example, in the burial chamber of TT 335, Isis appears as a crouching winged figure on the topmost part of the south wall, above that tomb's version of the embalming booth motif (PM I:1<sup>2</sup>, 403; Bruyère 1926, 161 fig. 108; see Fig. 42). She may appear to be a singular figure if her wall were considered in isolation, yet in fact she forms a pair with the winged figure of Nephthys in the upper section of the north wall opposite (Bruyère 1926, 155 fig. 103). The two goddesses embrace the chamber, enfolding and protecting the individuals who were interred there. The winged figures of Isis and Nephthys in these five tombs demonstrate that their co-agency in Theban material is not simply a consequence of scene choice, a redundant dynamic that survived the transfer from the *Book of the Dead* to tomb walls. Co-agency appears to be a dynamic that Theban artists were purposefully utilising.

The tomb of Neferrenpet at el-Khokha (TT 178) contains one of the relatively few examples of kin co-agency outside of the Isis/Nephthys pairing. In the outer room of the chapel, where the north and east walls meet, Neferrenpet and a host of generic male divinities are shown adoring the sun disk, which is held by an anthropomorphised *djed* pillar and by a pair of arms that extend from the mountain of the horizon (PM I:1<sup>2</sup>, 284;

Hoffman 1995, col. pl. 9, pl. 36; see Fig. 61). The motif is comparable with the ‘sunrise vignette’ (BD Spell 16: Naville 1886, I, pl. 21–2), in some versions of which the pillar is captioned as Osiris. The arms emerging from the mountain are comparable with similar imagery in TT 1 and elsewhere (see §2.4.1), and so can be identified as Nut. The TT 178 therefore depicts Nut and Osiris clasping the sun disk together, an occurrence of kin co-agency expressed through a mother/son pairing. However, such examples are far less common than those featuring Isis and Nephthys.

Non-kin co-agents are the least-attested category of goddess figures in the Theban sample, constituting a median average of 0% of a tomb’s goddess figures and a mean average of just 2% (see Chart 1). One of the rare pairings that utilises this role is between Maat and Thoth, who can appear to together to operate the scales of judgement. The motif is also observable, once more, in TT 335, where Thoth appears in baboon form with a damaged figure of Maat on the north wall of the burial chamber (PM I:1<sup>2</sup>, 403; Bruyère 1926, 155 fig. 103). The pairing also appears in the tomb of Qaha (TT 360), as referenced in the outline of the proposed typology of roles in the introductory chapter (PM I:1<sup>2</sup>, 425; Bruyère 1933, pl. 29; see §1.5.2). Nonetheless, most occurrences of co-agency among goddesses in Theban tombs relate to figures who share a kinship relationship, who in most cases are Isis and Nephthys specifically.

Turning now to the temple environments examined by this thesis— at Abydos, Abu Simbel, and Karnak— co-agency is once again one of the lowest-attested expressions of pairing. At Abydos (see Table 3; Chart 5), non-kin co-agents make up 0% of the goddess figures in the second hypostyle hall and 3% in the areas associated with the chapel of Isis (these are images of Isis as Shentayt with Wepwawet, on the door of the shrine, for whom a kinship connection is tenuous: PM VI, 16; Calverley et al. 1958, pl. 15). Meanwhile at Karnak, non-kin co-agents are absent from the wall scenes of the Great Hypostyle Hall,

while kin co-agents account for 6% of its goddess figures (see Chart 13). In the Small Temple at Abu Simbel, non-kin co-agents account for 5% of goddess figures (see Chart 8), a statistic that accounts for two goddess images: the figures of Hathor and Isis in the vestibule's coronation scene (PM VII, 116; DK 1968, II, pl. 98; see §3.3.2).

The Abu Simbel coronation scene, unparalleled though it may be as a composition, nonetheless introduces a frequent compositional setting for temple co-agents, where they appear: scenes where the king's reign is initiated or solidified. For example, in a very large scene on the north side of the doorway in the west of the Great Hypostyle Hall, Ramesses II is given life, power, and years of jubilee by Amun-Ra and Mut (PM II, 45; Nelson 1981, pl. 7). The god and goddess stand either side of the king, bestowing their blessings on him simultaneously. They work together similarly in other parts of the hall, such as on the south wall where they both use *renpet* staves to bestow Ramesses with jubilee symbols (PM II, 48; Nelson 1981, pl. 70). Where co-agents do appear in temple decoration, it is often in scenes such as these.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the coronation scene in the Small Temple's vestibule echoes another in the hypostyle hall (PM VII, 113; DK 1968, II, pl. 41–2), creating a complementarity between Nefertari and Ramesses II. The strategy has relevance to the current discussion, since the parity between the two scenes is formed through the visual mirroring of co-agencies. The scene in the hypostyle hall shows Ramesses being crowned by Horus and Seth, whose poses resonate with those of Isis and Hathor in the vestibule (see Fig. 26). The figures' depicted action creates a compositional echo between the two scenes, and in doing so draws an equivalence between central figures of each; Ramesses and Nefertari. The efficacy of the strategy depends on Hathor and Isis having a similar dynamic agency to Horus and Seth. Therein lies the difference between the representational nuance of co-agents and of the other pairing roles; co-agents not only act

together, but often do so from different positions and orientations within their scenes. This is in contrast with counterparts and supporters, who share the same position and orientation in their scene as the figure with whom they are paired. To depict a pair of deities as co-agents might therefore give a greater sense of activity and dynamism to the relationship being expressed, something that is utilised within the Small Temple's strategies of complementarity.

### *Counterparts*

As stated above, counterparts are distinguishable from co-agents since they share the same position and orientation as the figure with whom they are paired. However, unlike supporters, they do not make physical contact with that figure. A pairing formed using the role of counterpart has the appearance of two individuals juxtaposed together as mutual recipients of worship. In this way, each member might retain something of their individual presence. However, while the arrangement might generate a sense of relative parity between the figures, the goddesses depicted as counterparts in multi-gender pairings do not have equal status with their paired figures. The rules of compositional dominance outlined by Robins are still operational in these settings, so that goddesses mostly occupy secondary positions when depicted with their consorts (Robins 1994, 33–4), often and to most gods who are not beneath her in kinship hierarchies. A goddess-led pair of counterparts, and its likely relationship to gender hierarchies, is discussed in the first of the following case studies (see §4.3.2).

Counterparts are not evenly attested across the presented data sets; they are rare in some contexts and common in others. In the Theban sample, counterparts account for a median average of 0% of a tomb's goddess figures, and a mean average of 8% (see Chart 1). There are outlier monuments in which counterparts are more common, such as TT 178

in which they make up 49% of goddess images (see Table 1), yet in most cases counterparts represent a relatively small proportion of the female deities depicted in a Theban tomb. Meanwhile, at Memphis, counterparts constitute a median average of 33% of a tomb's goddess images, and a mean average of 31% (see Chart 2). They appear in all but one tomb, that of Sayempeteref (PM III:2<sup>2</sup>, 716–7; see Table 2). Despite the small size of the Memphite sample, the proximity of the mean and median averages suggests an even distribution of the data points. The role usually constitutes a third of a Memphite tomb's goddess figures, while it is less consistently attested in Theban monuments.

The Memphite material's apparent emphasis on counterparts and avoidance of co-agents might suggest regional artistic differences in how goddesses are depicted (discussed further below in relation to supporters). If the existence of such distinctions can be supported, then they could provide a contextualising lens for monumental programmes that appear to tend towards one set of regional patterns or another. For example, in the previously discussed tomb of Paser (TT 106: see §2.3), counterparts claim 46% of the goddess figures identifiable in the MMA photographs (see Chart 14), while co-agents do not account for any. These demographics are unusual for a Theban tomb, but not for a Memphite monument. Paser's heritage leads one to wonder whether the correlation may be more than accidental. An inscription on the back pillar of a statue of Paser (CG 630: PM III:2<sup>2</sup>, 838), originally dedicated in the temple of Ptah at Memphis, states that Paser's mother Merytra (who features prominently in TT 106) was 'of Memphis' (*KRI* III, 13.13–4). A seated pair statue of Merytra and Paser (Copenhagen AEIN 50: Jørgensen 1998, 208–9), whose provenance Kitchen cautiously attributed to Hatshepsut's temple at Deir el-Bahari (*KRI* III, 21.14), carries an inscription that identifies Merytra in similar terms to that of the Cairo statue. Merytra's Memphite origins therefore appear to have been an important aspect of her identity, and not simply a convenient detail for Paser to emphasise

on the Cairo statue to suit its dedication in the Ptah temple. Paser appears to have had a strong Memphite heritage, at least on his mother's side. Hofmann has already noted that the rendering of figures in TT 106 is reminiscent of Memphite styles (2004, 103). Might these stylistic choices have been made to align Paser's tomb with his ancestral home? If so, might the tomb's goddess figures have been rendered in a manner consistent with practices in Memphite tomb decoration? This is an intriguing possibility, one that might suggest wider applications for this study's models and methodologies. However, an intriguing possibility is as far as this correlation might be currently be taken.

Turning to the temple case studies, the picture for counterparts is once again varied. In the wall scenes of Karnak's Great Hypostyle Hall, the role accounts for 45% of goddess figures (Chart 13), their most frequently depicted role in the space. The prominence of counterparts at Karnak stands in contrast to the other temple case studies, where an overwhelming majority of goddess figures are depicted with individual agency. In the second hypostyle hall at Abydos, 83% of goddess figures are shown as individual agents and just 10% as counterparts. The role accounts for just 3% of goddess figures associated with Abydos' Isis chapel (see Chart 5), these being the previously noted examples of goddess-led pairs (see §4.3.2). In the Small Temple at Abu Simbel, counterparts make up just 8% of goddess images, while individual agents constitute 82% (see Chart 8).

In trying to explain this disparity, we might consider the differing ritual focuses of these spaces, and their likely effect on decorative narratives. The Great Hypostyle Hall is within the temple of Amun, and as such the god is central to the hall's decoration. It is rare to find a scene that does not feature Amun in some way, and where he does appear, he takes precedence. The relatively low number of goddesses with individual agency at Karnak is probably not due to a different conceptualisation of goddesses in that space. Rather, the issue at hand is Amun's position of absolute primacy; most other deities are

present in relation to him. However, the fact that many of the hall's goddesses appear alongside Amun does not in itself explain why they are depicted as counterparts when they are. The centrality of Amun might result in Karnak's higher levels of pairing, yet it cannot account for the means of pairing. A proposed explanation will be presented in light of the attestations of supporters, discussed below.

### *Supporters*

The final subcategory of 'pairing roles' concerns goddess figures shown laying their hands on or embracing another deity. Supporters occupy a secondary position in their scenes, as demanded by the mechanisms of Egyptian two-dimensional art; in order for one figure to lay hands on another whilst facing the same direction, the first figure must stand behind the second. What is more, the depicted action of a supporter is directed towards the figure they support, perhaps creating a degree of removal from the larger action of the scene. However, as will be shown through the following case studies (§4.3–4), to label such figures as 'passive' may be overly simplistic, obscuring the nuances of how their agency might function within their secondary positions. Nevertheless, the range of that agency within a scene does appear visually limited.

As with the other pairing roles, attestations of supporters vary between data sets and individual contexts, yet some trends can nonetheless be identified. Supporters are represented consistently in the Theban tomb sample, constituting a median average of 23% of a Theban tomb's goddess figures, and a mean average of 22% (see Chart 1). The role is therefore the second most-attested after individual agents and recipients. Furthermore, while the depiction of co-agency appears to be a characteristically Theban feature in private tomb decoration, the use of the supporter role nonetheless seems to have been the method of pairing favoured by Theban artists. Meanwhile, in the Memphite sample,

supporters are attested less often and less consistently, having a negatively skewed distribution; supporters constitute a median average of 4% of a Memphite tomb's goddess images, but a mean average of 19% (see Chart 2).

These trends in the attestation of supporters in tombs, together with the demographics of co-agents and counterparts, suggest that local artistic traditions had differing preferred methods for pairing goddesses with other figures. Memphite artists consistently used the role of counterpart, with the use or inclusion of supporters varying between monuments. If the sample is representative, then co-agents do not seem to have featured in the Memphite repertoire, or to have featured so rarely that they are now absent from the material studied by this thesis. Theban artists appear to have used a more diverse range of pairing techniques, with all three roles attested within the sample. However, as noted above, there is nonetheless a broad preference for using supporters to form pairs. The application of both the typology of roles and descriptive statistics to the tomb data sets has therefore suggested that the techniques used to pair goddess figures may have been as much a part of local artistic practices as any other stylistic or iconographic features.

Looking now to the temple material, supporters are rarely attested in the contexts examined by this study. They are absent from the Small Temple at Abu Simbel (see Chart 8), make up just 2% of goddess figures in the second hypostyle hall at Abydos, and also account for 2% of goddesses in the chapel of Isis (see Chart 5; discussed further in §4.3). The lack of supporters at Abu Simbel and Abydos might initially be attributed to the centrality of goddesses in all or part of their decorative programmes, yet this assumption is problematised by the fact that there appear to be no supporters of the usual kind in the wall scenes of Karnak's Great Hypostyle Hall (see Chart 13). One possible example of a supporter occurs on the east wall, where Mut and Amun-Ra are shown embracing nose to nose (PM II<sup>2</sup>, 49; Nelson 1981, pl. 107). However, the compositional dynamics of this

pairing are different than for most supportive pairings. The figures are mirrored, turned inwards to each other. Mut stands in front of Amun to embrace him, though as a result she seems to be disengaged from the incense offering being made by Ramesses II. This could possibly be interpreted as a supportive pairing, yet Mut's image does not appear function in the same way as other supporters so far cited. However, even if she *were* understood as a supporter, the role nonetheless appears rarer in temple decoration than in tomb scenes.

We may note that the relative lack of supporters in the Great Hypostyle Hall is concurrent with the predominance of counterparts discussed above. What is more, while pairing is generally less common at Abydos and Abu Simbel, most occurrences of it also utilise the role of counterpart. It is therefore likely that an explanation for the scarcity of supporters in these environments will be one and the same as for the relative frequency of counterparts. To arrive at a possible solution, we should consider both the visual dynamics of the roles in question, and the function that they fulfil within temples as ritual spaces. It has already been noted that the compositional range of a supporter's agency is limited, as their action is directed towards the figure they support. This may be counterproductive to the function of temple decoration, which sought to maintain cosmic order through the creation of a harmonised worldview and the eternalisation of ritual interactions with the divine (e.g. Baines 1997, 232, Shafer 1997, 1, 21–2). It therefore seems likely that the artists designing temple scenes would want to maximise the possibility of reciprocity within the interactions they materialised, which supporters may have had limited ability to satisfy. Counterparts, however, are often depicted in stances that direct their focus outward towards the ritual officiant. Such poses perhaps implied a more direct and reciprocal engagement, and thus counterparts might have been preferred over supporters as a means of depicting goddesses in temple contexts.

To summarise, several patterns have emerged from these compositional and quantitative analyses of co-agents, counterparts, and supporters. Firstly, the use of the roles in tomb decoration appears to follow local patterns, perhaps relating to artistic preferences. Secondly, the ritual function and focus of a space seems to affect how prevalent pairing is in the first instance, and also which roles tend to be used to depict those pairs. Counterparts appear to be broadly favoured over supporters in temple contexts, a possible explanation for which is the limiting effect that visual dynamics of the supporter role may have on the compositional agency of a figure. These observations contextualise the following case studies, in which the pairing roles are used to express kin-based, thematic, and identity relationships. Through these case studies, the functioning of the pairing roles can be further investigated, as can the secondary status that most goddesses seem to occupy within multi-gender pairings.

### 4.3. Pairing and Persona at Abydos: Kin Relationships and Female Status

#### 4.3.1. Expressions of 'Extended Persona' in the Temple of Seti I

For the first case study, we return to Seti I's Abydos temple, looking not to the second hypostyle hall but to the chapels adjoining it. Over the course of this discussion, it is argued that a function of the chapels' decorative programmes is to evoke aspects of the resident deity's persona that are bound up in, and expressed through, their relationships with other deities. Four of the chapels use kin-based pairing to achieve this strategy. One of the four chapels is that of Isis, where variations in the scheme used by the other chapels appear to intersect with gender dynamics. The example therefore provides an opportunity to consider the pervasiveness of gender hierarchies, yet also opens the conversation about their nuances.

The nature of those representational patterns should first be established. The internal space of each of the seven chapels (recorded in Calverley et al. 1933 and 1935) is a large vaulted chamber with an east-west alignment, divided into west and east halves by two inscribed protrusions halfway along the north and south walls (see Plan 6; Fig. 43). The wall scenes are divided into upper and lower registers, and mostly depict the king conducting episodes of the daily temple ritual in front of the chapel's resident deity. The accompanying texts contain the rubrics and recitations for each stage of the ritual. The scenes in the chapels cover episodes 1–47 of the daily service (using David's sequence: 2016, 133), though not every chapel depicts every episode, or the entirety of every episode. Some of the only scenes inside the chapels that do not directly pertain to the daily ritual occur in the upper registers of the west half, these being large depictions of the divine barque of the chapel's deity. In the case of Osiris' chapel, the god's barque appears on the north wall while the south depicts the fetish of Abydos supported by carrying poles (PM VI, 15; Calverley et al. 1933, pl. 6, 10). The images of divine barques in the western halves of the chapels likely reflect the physical placement of actual barque shrines in those areas (O'Connor 2009, 45, 49; for relationship between wall decoration and room function, see Arnold 1962, 42–56).

The decoration of the west half of a chapel may therefore have an additional function to the scenes of the east half. The latter eternalises a series of ritual interactions with the deity, while the former anchors the presence of that deity within the space. The hooks of this anchor are the iconographic details of the barques and emblems, which identify the deity via their associated features and thus secure their presence. In the Osiris chapel, this is in part achieved through the depiction of the Abydos fetish on the south wall, evoking the god's participation in Abydos' annual festivals and procession (see Eaton 2006, 84–8). In the chapel of Amun-Ra, the aegises of the god's barques are in the

form of his sacred ram emblem (PM VI, 14; Calverley et al. 1935, pl. 5, 10; see Gabolde 2018, 563). The anchoring of a deity within the west half of their chapels therefore occurs through the visual expression of that deity's persona, through the symbols and objects in which that persona is crystallised.

It is therefore intriguing that in five of the seven chapels— the exceptions being the shrines of Osiris and Seti— the west half is the only area of the chapel interior to contain depictions of deities other than the resident god or goddess. The lintel and jambs of the exterior doorway may depict deities associated with the chapel resident (PM VI, 10–2, 14–7; Calverley et al. 1958, pl. 12, 18, 21, 24, 27, 32), yet the interior scenes of these five chapels are dominated by the resident god or goddess. In the chapels of Osiris and Seti, the main recipient of cult appears alongside other figures at various points in the shrine's decorative programme (PM VI, 10–15–6; Calverley et al. 1933, pl. 10, 13; 1935, pl. 30–6), yet in the other chapel interiors other deities only occur in the west half of the space. The area that is most closely tied to the presence of the resident.

The chapel's west end may, at first glance, seem the least appropriate place for other deities to appear. Yet such an objection presupposes that other divinities cannot express the resident deity's persona, which is precisely what *does* seem to occur. The chapels of Horus, Isis, Ra-Horakhty, and Ptah offer particularly suggestive examples, since the divinities who enter the decorative programme are closely associated with the resident god or goddess, and also appear in a structured way. In each of these four shrines, the lower register on the west end of the south wall contains a series of vignettes from the daily temple ritual, at least one of which features the resident god in a pairing with another deity as they receive cult from the king (see Fig. 44). In the chapel of Horus, Isis sits behind her son and supportively clasps his upper arm (PM VI, 18; Calverley et al. 1933, pl. 30). Horus is again supported by a goddess on the west half of the north wall; the surface is

damaged, though the caption seems to indicate that she is a form of Isis (Calverley et al. 1933, pl. 27). In the chapel of Isis, it is Horus who sits supportively behind his mother, his arm held around her shoulders (PM VI, 17; Calverley et al. 1933, pl. 22). In the chapel of Ra-Horakhty, the goddess Iues-Aaes sits behind the sun god without placing her hands upon him, thereby assuming the role of his counterpart (PM VI, 13; Calverley et al. 1935, pl. 18; David 2016, 148–9). Since Iues-Aaes can be identified with the hand of Atum (see §3.2.2), she is a consort of the sun god, and so her appearance creates another kin-based pairing. Finally, in the chapel of Ptah, the resident god is accompanied by his consort Sekhmet, who sits as his counterpart (PM VI, 12; Calverley et al. 1935, pl. 26). These pairings occur in the similar areas of their respective chapels, all involving deities who are closely associated with the main occupant. Their inclusion is likely systematic, a purposeful expression of a kin relationship in the area of the chapel that cements the presence of the resident deity within the space. Such connections should not be considered as external to the occupant's persona, but an aspect of it.

The present discussion uses the term 'extended persona' to describe this process. The extended persona is the aspects of a deity's being that is constructed by and through relationships, such as those expressed by the described pairings. The concept draws upon Assmann's model of constellations, which holds that Egyptian divinities are embedded within intersecting networks of relationships that ultimately give those deities meaning; Osiris is only Osiris because of how he related to Isis, to Horus, to Seth, and so on (Assmann 2001, 98–102). Through the strategically placed kin pairings in the cited chapels, these entangled relationships are incorporated into the decorative programme in a targeted way. They evoke the resident deity's interconnectedness, while also keeping them centred as the lens through which those relationships are perceived. It is a focused snapshot of relationality, one that the term 'extended persona' attempts to encapsulate.

The shrines of Horus, Isis, Ra-Horakhty, and Ptah use kin relationships to express their occupant's extended persona, yet the same relational dimension is present in the chapels of Osiris, Amun-Ra, and Seti I. As already noted, Osiris is paired with associated deities all over his chapel. Amun-Ra does not appear in kin pairings, though the images of his barque in the west of his chapel are accompanied by the smaller barques of his consort Mut and son Khonsu (PM VI, 14; Calverley et al. 1935, pl. 5, 10–1). The interior decoration of Seti's chapel is of a different character to the other shrines, containing images of processions and coronation in the east of the space and extensive offering lists beneath the barque scenes in the west (PM VI, 10; Calverley et al. 1935, pl. 30, 32, 35–6; David 2016, 192–9, 202–6). However, depicted beneath the stern of Seti's barque are statues of Seti himself, his father Ramesses I, and his mother Satra. Seti's extended persona may therefore be communicated through the images of his family and his dynastic predecessor. The coronation scenes in the eastern half of the chapel might even frame the extended persona of the pharaoh as being bound up in the office of kingship itself. All seven chapels can therefore be observed to express the relationality, or extended persona, of their resident.

#### 4.3.2. Extended Persona in the Chapel of Isis: A Rupture in Female Prominence?

The examples cited above suggest that the expression of extended persona was a representational aim in all seven chapels of Seti's temple, but one that was achieved through different means. In the four chapels that employ targeted kin pairing in their western half, the resident deity is usually featured as the primary figure, preserving their centrality to that relationship and to the decorative narrative of the chapel itself. The same occurs in the chapel of the temple's only female resident; Isis is depicted with her son Horus seated supportively behind her, as is appropriate for a chapel's residing deity. However,

where Isis' chapel differs from its contemporaries is that its western half contains two kin pairings on a single register; Horus also has two pairs, but on opposite walls of the western half. What is more, that pairing places her in a secondary position, within her own cultic space.

The figure who takes precedence over Isis is her consort, Osiris. This second pairing appears on the same register as the one depicting Isis and Horus, and shows Osiris seated with Isis standing behind him (PM VI, 17; Calverley et al. 1933, pl. 22; see Fig. 44). One of Isis' hands cradles Osiris' elbow, a moment of physical contact that marks her as a supporter. As previously noted, the role of supporter appears to place its occupant into a position of limited agency, which likely results in the rarity of supporters in the presented temple contexts (see §4.2.2). Isis is not only placed in a secondary position, but Osiris becomes the focus of her agency in the scene. In her own chapel— even if just for a moment— she is almost replaced as the dominant figure of the monumental narrative.

The dynamics of the Osiris/Isis pairing initially appears to run counter to the prominence of Isis, and of goddesses more generally in the chapel. Individual agents account for 82% of the goddess figures in the chapel and on its doorway (see Table 3; Chart 5), the majority of which are images of Isis. Indeed, goddesses in general are given greater prominence in the Isis chapel and its related areas. For instance, the lower sections of the entrance doorway's external jambs are where the chapel's two examples of counterparts are found. The scenes at the bottom of the north and south jambs both depict Seshat, who kneels before two *renpet* palm fronds that frame the cartouche of Seti I, with a generic male divinity without speech or identification shown kneeling behind her (PM VI, 16; Calverley et al. 1958, pl. 15, David 2016, 77; see Fig. 45). These are rare instances of a goddess occupying primary position over a god within a pairing, particularly where she is not presented as that god's mother. Furthermore, Seshat's position on the lower sections of

a chapel's door jambs is an adjustment to patterns in the wider scheme of the temple. The five other chapel doorways with preserved lower sections (those of Horus, Osiris, Ra-Horakhty, Ptah, and Seti) all depict Thoth inscribing the *renpet* fronds instead of Seshat, who herself is only otherwise pictured on the doorways of the Ptah and Seti chapels, in a secondary position (PM VI, 10–2, 14–5, 17; Calverley et al. 1958, pl. 12, 18, 24, 27, 32).

It therefore appears that female prominence and agency is, for the most part, actively centred in the Isis chapel. Isis' own prominence is due to her position as the recipient of cult, yet the substitution of Seshat for Thoth on the chapel's outer doorway suggests a conscious strategy. As a goddess of writing she is a suitable equivalent for Thoth in an area of female prominence. Indeed, the exchange seems to draw upon a parallelism that is drawn between the two deities elsewhere in the temple. The staircase leading from the 'corridor of the bull' and out of the temple towards Seti's Cenotaph (PM VI, 22, 26) carries two foundation texts, one covering the south wall and the other the north. The southern text is spoken by Thoth, who is pictured beside it, while the text on the north wall opposite is spoken by Seshat (Mariette 1869, I, pl. 50–2). The spatial parallelism of the texts creates a parity between the deities who speak them, an equivalency that seems to be utilised on the doorway of the Isis chapel to further foreground goddesses' agency.

The introduction of Osiris to Isis' pairing register might therefore seem like a rupture in that prominence. The resident deity is placed in a secondary position to her consort by norms of compositional dominance. In no other chapel is the resident shown in a secondary position, even if there are conceivable grounds for a resident god to temporarily occupy a secondary position to better express his extended persona. For example, the chapel of Horus also uses kin pairing, showing the god being supported by Isis, yet he is not shown in a secondary position alongside his father Osiris. This is despite

the fact that a relationship to Osiris is, perhaps, just as central to Horus' persona as it is to that of Isis. The passing of kingship from Osiris to Horus is evoked in ritual compositions since the Pyramid Texts (e.g. PT Spell 215 [144a]), and is the central plot point in *The Contendings of Horus and Seth* (Gardiner 1932, 37–60; Broze 1996). Furthermore, the transition of power from Osiris to Horus was a mythic precedent frequently utilised in narratives of kingship. The king was conceptualised as an earthly embodiment of Horus and thus the inheritor of Osiris' throne (Frankfort 1978<sup>2</sup>, 36–45), a role assumed by each new ruler and literally played out during the king's pre-coronation royal progress, each stop of which included a dramatization of the Osiris myth as the precursor to a crowning ceremony (see Morris 2010, 201–6). The relationship between Horus and Osiris was not only central to Horus' persona and his place in the mythic timeline, but integral to the theological basis of Egyptian kingship. Yet that relationship is not expressed in Horus' chapel as part of his extended persona.

The discrepancy in the use of kin pairing in the chapel of Isis and the other sanctuaries likely indicates that it would have been inappropriate to depict gods in secondary positions within their own cultic spaces. It is yet another expression of the 'compositional conservatism' present in the depiction of gods. The same concerns do not seem to have extended to Isis. The resulting implication is that the generally secondary status of goddesses that is observed elsewhere in this study's material, including most other areas of the Seti's Abydos temple (see §3.2.3), is preserved here in Isis' own shrine. Indeed, where Isis is depicted as Osiris' supporter, she is rendered in the same way as any other consort goddess. In the chapels of Ra-Horakhty and Ptah, where the resident god's consort appears alongside him to express his extended persona, both Iues-Aes and Sekhmet are seated on a lower levels than Ra-Horakhty and Ptah, who sit on raised daises (PM VI, 12–3; Calverley et al. 1935, pl. 18, 26; see Fig. 44). The figures of Iues-Aes and

Sekhmet are therefore depicted on a slightly larger scale, so that their heads draw level with Ra-Horakhty's and Ptah's, yet their position on a lower level likely communicates their secondary position to the resident god. This use of levels is preserved in the Isis chapel, where she stands behind Osiris rather than sitting, yet is nonetheless shown on a lower floor level than him. Even the striking prominence of Seshat on the chapel doorway might accommodate an underlying secondariness, since she does not take primacy over Thoth or another god with an identifiable persona or iconography, but a generic and unnamed male divinity who does not even speak. Therefore, the means of expressing extended persona in the Isis chapel is not a rupture of female prominence; it aligns with wider patterns in the hierarchical treatment of goddesses' agency.

#### 4.3.3. Kin Relationships and Secondary Status: Nuances of Hierarchy

The way kinship pairing is used in the chapel of Isis demonstrates the pervasiveness of goddesses' secondary status. Discussions of individual agency in the preceding chapters have already shown that female deities often occupy less prestigious positions in decorative programmes. Where goddesses do have increased prominence, it is often bounded or in some way mediated in relation to the overall primacy of gods. The analyses presented in this chapter have thus far indicated that the same dynamics are often reproduced in the pairing of divine figures. Indeed, hierarchical gender relations might be so intrinsic to multi-gender pairings that a goddess is able to be depicted in a secondary position even in her own chapel. However, just as the unexpected goddess figures on the east wall of Abydos' second hypostyle hall appear to gain unique functionality from their secondary status (see §3.2.4), so too might the broadly secondary status of goddesses provide representational opportunity.

As noted above, the gods of the other chapels probably do not assume secondary roles because of compositional conservatism. Gods are male, and maleness is generally privileged with higher status in the Egyptian representational system. A god will therefore be averse to being placed in a secondary position, particularly in contexts where he is central to an area's decorative programme. The same is not true for goddesses, whose agency and prominence is often treated as secondary to that of gods. Placing Isis in a secondary position to her consort may be unusual in comparison to the other chapel occupants, but as a goddess it is not unusual at all, and allows a deeply important relationship to be brought into the area of her chapel that visualises her extended persona. Isis' role in the Osirian narrative is a key aspect of her identity, as she is credited (along with Nephthys) as the one who resurrected Osiris in sources as early as the Pyramid Texts (e.g. PT Spell 218 [164a–b]; PT Spell 357 [584a–c]). By assuming a supportive role to Osiris within her own space, something the gods of the other chapels seem unable to do, a crucial dynamic within her mythology can be incorporated into her decorative programme. The expression of Isis' extended persona might betray a secondary status in wider hierarchies of agency, but it also suggests that such a position might reduce some of the representational constraints that govern the depiction of male deities. Hierarchy, it seems, is more complex than a two-tier distinction between those who have power and agency, and those who do not. This is a point that will be discussed and developed over the course of the remaining two case studies.

#### 4.4. Maat and Ptah at Deir el-Medina: Thematic Pairing, Communal Belonging, and the Importance of Secondary Status

##### 4.4.1. 'A True Scribe in the Place of Truth, Ramose': Manchester Museum 1759 and its Donor

We now consider the role of goddesses in thematic pairings. As noted in the first section of the chapter, two paired divinities may share a common association with certain symbolic or ritual functions, mythic narratives, or locations. What follows is an example of the latter, and the relationship between the two deities in question—Maat and Ptah—is argued to evoke ideas of place in both a physical and social sense, a process referred to in this thesis as 'emplacement' (§2.3.5). Discussion of the motif centres around an example from the votive stela of Ramose, whose deposition context (and the biographical details of its donor) are suggestive of the motif's possible social functions. Through these discussions, the nature of goddesses' secondary status itself is further problematised; while the occupation of pairing roles often places female deities in less prestigious or even subordinate positions, goddesses might still function as important generators of meaning in such contexts.

The focal object for this case study is Manchester Museum 1759 (PM I:2<sup>2</sup>, 689; *KRI* III, 624–5; *RCat.* 1; see Fig. 46), a round-topped stela discovered in the area surrounding the Ramesseum (Quibell et al. 1898, 8 n° 12, 15, pl. 10 n° 4). The inscribed face is divided into upper and lower sections, the former carrying a scene and the latter carrying the main text, with a kneeling figure of the donor inset into the left side of the inscription. Ptah and Maat are depicted sitting on the left side of the scene in the lunette. The figure of Maat, whose head is damaged, sits behind Ptah, with her left arm held around him and her right hand raised. Applying the categorisations of the proposed typology of goddesses' roles, she is classed as a supporter. As shown in the analysis of the

attestation of pairing roles (§4.2.2), supporters are frequently used to form pairs in Theban private tombs. While this is a different category of material and form of display, it is nonetheless part of the private sphere; the depiction of the goddess as a supporter is not as unusual here as it would be in the presented temple environments. However, it should nonetheless be noted for the purposes of these discussions that her gestures direct her action toward Ptah, who in turn becomes the focus of her agency. In terms of both the ordering of figures and the limited compositional range of her agency, her status is secondary. The implications of that, and its relationship to the possible meaning of this pairing, is examined below.

Before progressing to those discussions, it is prudent to make a few comments on the individual who commissioned and donated the monument. Ramose lived from about 1279 to 1213 BCE (Rice 1999, 169), and was active in commissioning monuments during the first half of Ramesses II's reign. He originated outside of the village of Deir el-Medina (Davies 1999, 79), yet became associated with the Theban west bank and its administration when, after probably being appointed an assistant scribe, he was made chief treasurer of the temple of Thutmose IV, and in the 5<sup>th</sup> year of Ramesses II's reign he entered the administration of the royal necropolis as a 'scribe of the tomb' (ibid.). He used his clearly sizeable wealth to integrate himself into the monumental fabric of Deir el Medina, commissioning three tombs— TT 7 (PM I:1<sup>2</sup>, 15–6), TT 212 (PM I:1<sup>2</sup>, 309), and TT 250 (PM I:1<sup>2</sup>, 336)— all of which are located in Deir el-Medina's western cemetery (PM I:1<sup>2</sup>, Map VII). In addition to his multiple votive stelae, Ramose produced several monuments in collaboration with the vizier Paser, chief among these being a structure adjacent to the south wall of Ramesses II's temple of Hathor. Known as the *Khenu* (Bruyère 1948–52, I, 72–9, 85–9; Valbelle 2014; see Fig. 47), the building appears to have been associated with the cult of the deified Ramesses II, indicated by a dedicatory panel that describes the

building as ‘the *Khenu* of Ramesses II, given life, <on> sacred ground’ (PM I:2<sup>2</sup>, 697; *KRI* II, 705; Bruyère 1948–52, II, 63–5, pl. 30 n° 70), although its function likely interrelated with that of Ramesses’ Hathor temple (Davies 1999, 80). Ramose’s investment in the monumental landscape of Deir el-Medina is important for contextualising the Manchester stela as an individual object, yet in the following discussions it will also cast light on the possible function of the Maat/Ptah pairing in local strategies of emplacement.

#### 4.4.2. A Local Motif

At first glance, there may appear nothing unusual about the pairing of Maat and Ptah on the Manchester stela. Ptah is depicted with his standard iconography, though the damage to Maat’s head obscures where we would expect her characteristic feather. The two deities also maintain the usual gendered ordering of figures, with the god sat in primary position and the goddess sat behind him. However, when considering the wider context of these deities’ representation and the geographical distribution of the Maat/Ptah pairing, the motif is indeed shown to be unusual, and also highly localised to the Theban west bank.

There is a small group of gods with whom Maat is regularly paired in Theban material, particularly in tomb decoration. These pairs express multiple types of relationship, and Maat adopts different pairing roles within those relationships. Ptah is not one of these gods. The male deity with whom Maat is most frequently paired is the sun god, usually in the form of Ra-Horakhty and often (though not exclusively) on the lintels of doorways, as can be seen on the door into the inner hall in TT 178 (PM I:1<sup>2</sup>, 284; Hofmann 1995, pl. 30). Her pairing with a form of the sun god expresses a kin relationship, coordinating with her standard epithet ‘daughter of Ra’ (Leitz 2002, VI, 106–7), which appears on the Manchester stela. Another common companion of Maat is Osiris, the two being depicted together across the Theban necropolis and beyond, for instance

where they appear on a wall fragment from the Memphite tomb of Hormin (KS 144: PM III:2<sup>2</sup>, 664; Gaballa 1977, pl. 40; Pernigotti 1997, 143). The fragment depicts a judgement scene, in which Maat— now only represented by her arm and caption— follows behind Osiris-Wennefer. She is also attested in pairings with Thoth, to whom she is a counterpart in a scene in the outer hall of TT 178 (PM I:1<sup>2</sup>, 284; Hofmann 1995, pl. 22), and with whom she operates the scales of judgement as a co-agent in several Deir el-Medina burial chambers, for instance in TT 335 and TT 336 (PM I:1<sup>2</sup>, 403, 404; Bruyère 1926, 83 fig. 54, 155 fig. 103). Maat’s pairings with both Osiris and Thoth express thematic relationships, evoking narratives of justification. These three gods are the figures with whom Maat is most often associated across the representational landscape of the Theban west bank, rather than Ptah.

Mapping out the instances where Maat *does* appear with Ptah, two localised clusters emerge. The first is the workmen’s village of Deir el-Medina. Only three of the private tombs listed in the *Topographical Bibliography* contain depictions of Maat and Ptah as a pair, these being: the tomb of Khabekhnet (TT 2: PM I:1<sup>2</sup>, 8), where Maat sits behind Ptah in a shrine exhibiting a similar supportive pose to the Ramose stela (Bruyère 1952, pl. 5; see Fig. 48); the tomb of Qen (TT 4: PM I:1<sup>2</sup>, 11) where she is also a supporter (Griffith Institute Photo 2009); the tomb of Nebenmaat (TT 219: PM I:1<sup>2</sup>, 321–2). All three are located at Deir el-Medina. Broadening the view to include stelae, Maat and Ptah appear together on several objects in addition to the Manchester example. Three stelae depict Ptah standing with a winged Maat behind him, enfolding him in what is perhaps a more protective variant of the supporter stance. These are: a 20<sup>th</sup> Dynasty stela of Qaha in Munich (ÄS 42: PM I:1<sup>2</sup>, 424; Wildung 1980, 38–9; Dyroff and Pörtner 1904, 37–8, pl. 18 n° 27); a fragment now held in Strasbourg (Inst. d’Égyptologie 201: PM I:2<sup>2</sup>, 714; Spiegelberg and Pörtner 1902, 19–20, pl. 19 n° 34); a stela discovered in the north sector

of Deir el-Medina's Ptolemaic temple enclosure, depicting Merenptah offering to Ptah and winged Maat (Bruyère 1948–52, II, 142 fig. 233, 143 n° 382). A final stela from Deir el-Medina, dedicated by Maaninakhtef and Neferabu in the 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty (BM EA 269), depicts Ptah seated in its lunette with Maat stood behind him, her arm around him supportively (PM 1:2<sup>2</sup>, 725; Hall 1925, 12, pl. 40). When looking for examples of the Maat/Ptah pairing in private Theban monuments, there is a clear convergence on the workmen's village.

The Manchester stela might initially appear to be an outlier to this pattern, since it was discovered in the area around the Ramesseum. However, the Ramesseum is just a short distance from Deir el-Medina; it can be seen from across the Great Pit at the northeast of the village (see Fig. 49). Indeed, it may even have been visible from Ramose's *Khenu*. Furthermore, Paser— the *Khenu*'s other commissioner— also dedicated votive material at the Ramesseum, in the form of a shabti (Donohue 1988, 110; Quibell et al. 1898, pl. 5). We might therefore suggest that the Ramesseum could serve as an extension of Deir el-Medina's zone of monumental investment, as a site of votive activity, and thus the Manchester stela can thus be understood as part of Ramose's programme of emplacement that centred the workers' village. The object is perhaps an outpost of Maat and Ptah's first cluster of attestations, but it is not necessarily an outlier.

The second clustering of attestations occurs in monuments outside of the private sphere, in the tombs of four Ramessid royal women. Three of these tombs are located in the Valley of the Queens. One belongs to an unnamed woman (QV 40: PM 1:2<sup>2</sup>, 752), while the others belong to two daughters and wives of Ramesses II; Merytamun (QV 68: PM 1:2<sup>2</sup>, 766) and Bentanat (QV 71: PM 1:2<sup>2</sup>, 766). The fourth tomb, like the Manchester stela, would initially appear to be an outlier, this being the tomb of Tawosret in the Valley of the Kings (KV 14: PM 1:2<sup>2</sup>, 528–30). However, closer inspection suggests that the

occurrence of the Maat/Ptah pairing in KV 14 is not an outlier at all. There are three depictions of the pairing in Tawosret's tomb; one on the north wall of chamber A, in which Maat stands as a counterpart behind a shrine containing Ptah (PM 1:2<sup>2</sup>, 529; Altenmüller 2012, 77 fig. 4.1; see Fig. 50), and mirrored scenes on the north and south walls of chamber I, in which winged Maat enfolds Ptah as a supporter (PM 1:2<sup>2</sup>, 530). All three occur in the upper section of Tawosret's tomb (chambers A to J), which according to Hartwig Altenmüller was built during her time as a regent for Siptah, and thus was originally decorated for her as a queen (Altenmüller 2012, 72–80). KV 14 is therefore not an outlier; it joins the three attestations of the Maat/Ptah pairing in the Valley of the Queens to suggest that the motif was associated with the tomb programmes of Ramessid queens, as well as appearing in the private monuments of the artisans' community.

#### 4.4.3. Maat and Ptah: An Icon of Emplacement

The two concentrations of the Maat and Ptah pairing suggest that the motif is a feature of queenly tomb decoration, imagery that was in turn utilised by the people who built those tombs. What explanation might be found for the emergence of this highly localised phenomenon? It could be suggested that the pairing is intended to evoke the epithet 'Lord of Maat', which is frequently attributed to Ptah (Leitz 2002, III, 639–41). Indeed, Ptah's position at the front of the pair—allocated to him by compositional gender hierarchy—could be argued to visually reinforce his dominance as 'Lord' of the concept of *maat*, and therefore of the goddess who embodies it. However, the 'Lord of Maat' epithet is applied to Ptah in material from various locations and across periods (*ibid.*). Looking within this study's data sets, we see Ptah being given this designation on multiple occasions in his chapel at Seti I's Abydos temple, and in its associated areas of the second hypostyle hall (see Calverley et al. 1935, pl. 22–7; 1958, pl. 25, 27, 46, 77). Despite the frequency with

which Ptah assumes this epithet, at sites across Egypt, his appearances alongside Maat remain limited to material from the Theban west bank. The idea that the pairing is simply an illustration of ‘Ptah Lord of Maat’ therefore seems an insufficient explanation, as it does not account for the motif’s apparent restriction the physical and institutional settings of the royal necropolis. It shall instead be suggested that the pairing evokes ideas of place, something that at Deir el-Medina may take on a social aspect of communal belonging.

In the tombs of queens, the pairing might serve to embed a monument within its physical surroundings. Ramessid textual sources indicate that Ptah was associated with the Valley of the Queens, such as a votive ostrakon of the 20<sup>th</sup> Dynasty scribe Amenhotep (CGC 25052), which depicts the god standing before a table of offerings and names him as ‘Ptah of the *st-nfrw*/Valley of the Queens’ (Keller 2003, 89–90). His connection to the area is further indicated by the sanctuary that he shares with Meretseger, located on the desert road between Deir el-Medina and the valley (Bruyère 1930, 5–59). Meanwhile, the wider necropolis in which the Valley of the Queens was set was called the *st-M3t*/Place of Truth (TLA lemma-no. 125240, 125250), a toponym that resonates with the name of the goddess depicted in these examples. We therefore have a pairing between the patron god of the Valley of the Queens, and the goddess who lends her name to the whole restricted necropolis, whose attestations are limited to the Valley of the Queens and the Theban necropolis. It is therefore possible that the choice to depict this motif in a queen’s tomb is intended to evoke the setting of that monument within the landscape. The strategy appears to have been replicated in the queenly phase of KV 14, despite its location in the Valley of the Kings. When joined together in this unusual pairing, which places Ptah in in primary position in accordance with the standard ordering of gendered figures, the two divinities appear to function almost as iconographic coordinates; they embedding a queen’s tomb first in the Valley of the Queens (Ptah), and then the Place of Truth (Maat) more broadly.

The association of Maat and Ptah with the physical landscape of the necropolis appears to have been retained in some uses of the motif by the artists and workmen of Deir el-Medina. The Qaha stela (ÄS 42) is one such example, that caption Ptah as being ‘of the *st-nfrw*’ (Wildung 1980, 38–9). The survival of these connotations across contexts is probably not an accident of transferral, since not all examples of the pairing at Deir el-Medina give Ptah the *st-nfrw* epithet; in the Manchester Museum example, he is simply called ‘Lord of Maat’ (*KRI* III, 624.15). Therefore, where the workmen do link Ptah to the *st-nfrw*, it is may have been an intentional choice. They were the ones who worked in the valley and produced the royal tombs in which the Maat/Ptah motif was utilised; perhaps they wanted to memorialise that aspect of their social selves in their monuments. The pairing’s associations with the physical setting of the Valley of the Queens might therefore have been just as active and resonant to those who built the tombs as to queens interred within them.

However, a possible difference in the function of the Maat/Ptah motif at Deir el-Medina is in the intimated social dimension of its use. While the pairing may have continued to explicitly or implicitly evoke a geographical setting– the Valley of the Queens– the only occurrences of it in the private sphere are in the monuments of the community who had access to that setting. The pairing of Maat and Ptah at Deir el-Medina might therefore take on an aspect of communal belonging, being a visual signifier of membership of the community of tomb builders. After all, to know and use the motif implies access to restricted spaces and involvement with some of the most important state building projects. An interest in reproducing imagery from royal tomb decoration is visible elsewhere at Deir el-Medina, for instance in TT 335 and 336, which both contain versions of a scene in which Isis and Nephthys attend the ram-headed Ra-Osiris (PM I:1<sup>2</sup>, 403, 405; Bruyère 1926, 100 fig. 67, 136 fig. 92). These appear to be based upon a scene in the tomb

of Nefertari (QV 66: PM I:2<sup>2</sup>, 763; Thausing and Goedicke 1971, pl. 41). The workmen's village therefore appears to be a context where scenes are moving between the royal and private spheres, something likely facilitated by the community's involvement with royal tomb production. It is therefore feasible that the individuals who depicted the pairing in their tombs, or on their stelae, may have been identifying themselves as part of the community of craftsmen with access to the royal necropolis and involvement in its workings.

Returning to Manchester Museum 1759, the stela's deposition near the Ramesseum is contextualised by the function of the Maat/Ptah pairing as a shared emblem of emplacement, being part of Ramose's wider monumental strategy. As noted at the beginning of the discussion (§4.4.1), Ramose did not originally come from Deir el-Medina. His multiple tombs and monuments associated with the village might indicate a concerted effort to integrate himself into the local landscape, in both literal and social terms. An active effort to emplace himself at Deir el-Medina is visible in his other stelae, such as Voronezh D-156 (discussed in §2.3.5) which depicts Taweret as a hippopotamus-headed woman, a form of the goddess that may be associated with her cultic presence in the workers' village. Similar strategies of emplacement were employed by Ramose's associate Paser, for instance through the Pillar H compositions in his tomb at Sheikh Abd el-Qurna (ibid.) or his work with Ramose on the *Khenu*. As discussed earlier in the chapter, Paser was from a Memphite family on his mother's side, and as an outsider to 'The Village' may therefore have shared Ramose's desire to embed himself in Deir el-Medina's monumental landscape, as well as in the Theban west bank more broadly. By placing the Manchester stela near the Ramesseum, Ramose extends his monumental programme outwards from Deir el-Medina, yet in doing so he uses a motif that in the private sphere appears to be closely connected to the workers' village. He presents himself

as a man of Deir el-Medina, and of the institution of the royal necropolis; ‘a true scribe in the Place of Truth’.

Significantly for this chapter’s wider discussions of pairing and status, Ramose’s statement is articulated through, indeed depends on, a goddess who occupies a secondary position. Indeed, she is not only secondary to Ptah in terms of ordering, but her role as a supporter visually restricts the range of her agency to his figure, perhaps making her dependent upon him for her presence in the compositional narrative of the scene. Yet while Ptah is the member of the pairing who appears to evoke the Valley of the Queens, the iconographic coordinates are only complete with the presence of Maat. Through the resonance of her name, she evokes the restricted necropolis as a wider landscape, and crucially for the community of Deir el-Medina and Ramose, as an institution. Therefore, whether the Maat and Ptah pairing appears in the tombs of queens or of artisans, a significant part of the motif’s meaning is generated by the goddess who follows behind Ptah as his counterpart or supporter. This conclusion invites us to once again consider the implications of secondary status, and the assumptions that may surround the beings who possess it. Goddesses who occupy apparently ‘subordinate’ positions might hold a great deal of importance for the meaning of a scene. Hierarchy and compositional dominance are undoubtedly central features of Egyptian visual representation, yet there is room for nuance within them. The Maat and Ptah motif, whose function in the context of the workers’ community is perhaps exemplified by Manchester Museum 1759, is not just an example of how thematic pairing can express ideas such as social and physical place. It is a reminder that secondary agency is, nonetheless, a form of agency. One must be cautious of treating secondary status, and the roles of those who poses it, as obvious or self-explanatory.

## 4.5. Taweret and Anuket in the Tomb of Nakhtamun (TT 335) at Deir el-Medina: Identity Relationships and Expressions of Multiplicity

### 4.5.1. Mistress of the *shn*, Lady of Sehel: A Pairing in Context

The final part of this chapter presents a case study that illustrates how spatial organisation might be used to express identity relationships between paired figures, as well as providing an example of a form of representation that seems to be largely restricted to goddesses; the close pairing of goddess figures through overlapping or superimposition. This method of depicting pairs of goddesses, it is argued, is a direct result of the lower levels of compositional conservatism in the depiction of female deities. It is, perhaps, the exemplar of the representational possibilities afforded by secondary status or peripherality.

The example in question is found in the vaulted burial chamber of TT 335 (PM I:1<sup>2</sup>, 403–4; see Plan 4). The north and south ends of the transverse room are each dominated by a single scene (Bruyère 1926, 155 fig. 103), while the decoration of the east and west walls is organised into lower and upper registers (Bruyère 1926, 153 fig. 102, 156–60, 163–5). The lower registers occupy the vertical planes of their walls, while the upper registers occur where the walls begin to arch inwards to form the vault. The tops of the upper registers meet in the centre of the ceiling. The upper and lower registers are divided by a large horizontal band of text, and within the registers each scene is separated from its neighbour by a vertical band of text. The decoration of the east and west walls therefore has the appearance of a series of panels, each contained within a frame of inscriptions.

One of these panels— in the lower register of the west wall, the second panel from the north end— depicts two goddesses stood alongside one another (PM I:1<sup>2</sup>, 403; Bruyère 1926, 157 fig. 105; see Fig. 51). The foremost of the two is a composite figure, with a woman's head, a hippopotamus' body, a lion's front legs, and a crocodile's tail. The

second figure is fully anthropomorphic, wearing a headdress of ostrich feathers while holding an *ankh* in her right hand and a *was* sceptre in her left. Her left arm is held out in front of her, overlapping the first figure who is visible through it. The second figure is Anuket, identifiable from her caption ‘Anuket Lady of Sehel’ (Bruyère 1926, 156) and by her iconography, which is standard for the goddess (Valbelle 1981, 112–6). The first figure is not directly named, but she is given the epithet ‘Mistress of the chapel (*shn*) upon the west of Thebes’ (Bruyère, *ibid.*). This occurrence of the epithet is only attested example (Leitz 2002, V, 204), though the shorter designation ‘Mistress of the chapel’ is attributed to Taweret on a single wooden door jamb from a small shrine, found at Deir el-Medina (*ibid.*; Bruyère 1939, III, 90 fig. 290. Based on the similarity of these epithets, this study identifies the second figure in the TT 335 scene as Taweret, for whom the form of a bipedal hippopotamus with human, crocodilian, and feline features would be standard (Gundlach 1986, 494–5; Sadek 1988, 125; Bruyère also made this identification, due instead to his understanding of the term *shn* as being related to *msht*/birth place: 1926, 157–8).

The pairing of these two goddesses reflects the wider religious life of Deir el-Medina. As discussed in Chapter 2, Taweret appears in tombs across the Theban necropolis, but appears to have been worshiped in a chapel at Deir el-Medina, a cultic setting that is likely evoked in votive objects such as Ramose’s Voronezh stela (see §2.3.5). Anuket also appears in the votive material of the workmen’s village. A limestone ostrakon, now in Stockholm (O.29 MM 14011 Stockholm: Peterson 1973, 77, pl. 19; see Fig. 52) depicts Anuket Lady of Sehel sat before a table of offerings, on the other side of which are two gazelles. Anuket’s association with the gazelle appears to have been an active and important part of her persona at Deir el-Medina. Another limestone ostrakon, now in the Cairo museum (JE 43660: see Bruyère 1948–52, II, pl. 40; see Fig. 53), depicts

a man making offerings before the figure of a gazelle that emerges from a hillside, in a manner reminiscent of Hathor emerging from the western mountain of Thebes in the vignette of BD Spell 186 (see Naville 1886, I, pl. 212). The man is named as the ‘king’s scribe in the Place of Truth, Hay’, dating the ostrakon to the reign of Ramesses III (Davies 1999, 51). He is captioned as ‘giving praises to Anuket’, while the gazelle itself is labelled ‘Anuket, Lady of the Sky, Mistress of the Gods’. The local importance of Anuket’s gazelle aspect will be returned to in considering the nature of her pairing with Taweret in the TT 335 scene.

However, while the union of Taweret and Anuket in one representational unit has a local significance, the pairing is not presented here as an example of thematic pairing. This is because the interaction between the two figures and the wider decorative scheme of the chamber appears to construct an identity relationship; Taweret and Anuket are not only connected by a shared association, they are part and parcel of one another. This impression, as shall now be discussed, is created through the spatial structuring of interactions between text and image.

#### 4.5.2. Taweret and Anuket as Forms of Hathor

As noted above, the lower registers of the east and west wall are separated from the upper scenes by a horizontal band of text. The band on the west wall, that runs above Taweret and Anuket, contains an offering formula invoking various deities (PM I:1<sup>2</sup>, 403). The section of text that appears directly over the heads of Taweret and Anuket invokes ‘Hathor chief of Thebes, Lady of the Sky, Mistress of all the Gods, the Eye of Ra’ (Bruyère 1926, 167; see Fig. 51).

The appearance of Hathor’s name and epithets— almost perfectly aligned to span the width of Taweret and Anuket’s panel— may at first appear to be a coincidence of spatial

organisation. However, other such ‘coincidences’ occur at several points in the chamber’s decorative scheme. To the right of the Taweret/Anuket panel, in the northernmost scene of the west wall, Nakhtamun and his wife Nebuemsheset are shown worshipping Ra-Horakhty (PM I:1<sup>2</sup>, 403; Bruyère 1926, 156 fig. 104; see Fig. 54). Meanwhile, the offering formula in the section of the band above the scene addresses ‘Ra-Horakhty-Atum, Lord of the Two Lands, the Heliopolitan, Khepri in the midst of his barque’ (Bruyère 1926, 167). On the other side of the chamber, on the second northernmost scene of the east wall, the draftsman Piay is depicted with a ram-headed form of Anubis (PM I:1<sup>2</sup>, 403; Bruyère 1926, 165 fig. 111; see Fig. 55). The section of offering formula in the band above invokes ‘Anubis Foremost in the Embalming Booth, Imyut, Lord of the Sacred Land’ (Bruyère 1926, 167). To the left, at the north end of the west wall, is a standing male figure with a skull cap and beard, who holds a spear made from a branch (PM I:1<sup>2</sup>, 403; Bruyère 1926, 153 fig. 102; see Fig. 56). The figure is captioned within the scene as ‘Lord of Maat’; a similar figure with that same designation appears in the tomb of Khabekhnet (TT 2; PM I:1<sup>2</sup>, 8; Bruyère 1930, 266 fig. 132). His skull cap and beard are reminiscent of Ptah, for whom (as noted in §4.4.3) the ‘Lord of Maat’ epithet is widely attested (Leitz 2002, III, 639–41; Sadek 1988, 104–5), thus it seems probable that this figure represents a form of Ptah or is otherwise associated with him. Meanwhile, the offering formula above the figure addresses ‘Ptah, Lord of Maat, King of the Two Lands, Perfect of Face upon (his) Great Seat’ (Bruyère 1926, 167).

The alignment between these scenes and the offering formulae above them seems too close to be coincidental. The pattern is not replicated across the chamber, but in the three scenes cited above the relationship between the images and the text above them is striking. If the figures of Taweret and Anuket were to also have a relationship with the deity invoked above, then a set of four such scenes would be created, comprising the two

northernmost panels of the east and west walls. This does indeed appear to be the case, since the deity named in the text above Taweret and Anuket's panel is Hathor. As will now be shown, both goddesses have Hathoric associations.

Taweret frequently appears alongside Hathor in versions of BD Spell 186, both on papyri and on tomb walls (Navelle 1886, I, pl. 212). Only Hathor is named in the text of the spell, perhaps implying that Taweret can be understood as an expansion of her. In some versions, such as on the east wall of the inner room of TT 178 (PM I:1<sup>2</sup>, 284; Hofmann 1995, pl. 33), Taweret is depicted wearing the Hathoric horns and sun disk. She is shown with similar attributes on the previously discussed votive stelae of Ramose and Penbuy from Deir el-Medina (see §2.3.5). The goddess' Hathoric associations are perhaps epitomised by her appearance in the vestibule of the Small Temple at Abu Simbel; here in the temple of Hathor, in an area that was part of Hathor's sphere of primacy in this study's proposed structuring of the space (see §3.3.4), Taweret assumes a fully anthropomorphic manifestation and wears the horns and sun disk (PM VII, 115–6; DK 1968, II, pl. 107–9).

Anuket can be connected to Hathor in several ways. Just as in TT 106, where the uraeus goddesses of the Pillar H ritual text jointly participate in several epithets, and therefore in one another (see §2.3.4), the 'Eye of Ra' epithet that is attributed to Hathor in the offering formula is also attested for Anuket in contemporary sources (Leitz 2002, I, 426–9). Furthermore, both Anuket and Taweret participate in Hathor's 'Lady of the Sky' designation (Leitz 2002, IV, 49–50), thus the epithet may function in a similar way here as it does in the title of the Pillar H spell, where it acts as a 'catch all' for the goddesses listed after it. Anuket is also depicted at Abu Simbel (PM VII, 113–4; DK 1968, II, pl. 43), and her name is inscribed on one of the Hathor-headed pillars of the hypostyle hall (PM VII, 114–5; DK 1968, I, 70; II, pl. 60), which serve to embody and negotiate Hathoric presence within the space (see §3.3.4).

Furthermore, it might be suggested that Hathoric connections are implicit in the depiction of Anuket at Deir el-Medina, through her previously noted association with gazelles. While Anuket is not represented as or with a gazelle in this scene, she is depicted as or with the animal on multiple occasions in local material culture, thus it might be understood as a regular aspect of her associations. In a similar vein, Duamutef is depicted in this same chamber as a crouching human figure (PM I:1<sup>2</sup>, 404; Bruyère 1926, 159 fig. 106), yet his canine form is nonetheless a key part of his wider iconography. As with the goddesses' mutual participation in the 'Eye of Ra' epithet, Anuket and Hathor appear to share a connection with the gazelle. In *The Contendings of Horus and Seth*, Hathor heals Horus' eyes with the milk of a passing gazelle (Gardiner 1932, 50–1, 10.6–9). The gazelle motif occurs in relation to Hathoric symbolism in the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty tomb of Kheruef at el-Assasif (TT 192: PM I:1, 296, 298–300), which contains a scene depicting the 'towing of the night barque' ceremony from the *Heb-Sed* celebrations of Amenhotep III (Epigraphic Survey 1980, pls. 44–5). The procession includes women carrying Hathor-headed naos sistra, and others carrying both *menat* necklaces (associated with Hathor: e.g. Pinch 1993, 17–8, 269; Hartwig 2004, 64–5) and gazelle-headed wands, two of whom also wear a headdress of feathers similar to that of Anuket. The entanglement of gazelles in Hathoric imagery continued into the Ramessid period, attested on a block from the temple of Ramesses II at el-Kab that depicts two royal daughters wearing headdresses with a gazelle head on the forehead, whilst holding gazelle wands in one hand and raising a sistrum in the other (PM V, 175; see Wilkinson 1971, 117; Lilyquist et al. 2003, 154–61). The Hathoric dimension of gazelle imagery appears to have survived even into the Graeco-Roman period, since an inscription at the temple of Hathor at Philae names her 'The Gazelle of the Mountain' (PM VI, 251; Daumas 1969, 10, n. 65). While a shared connection to the gazelle may not be explicitly drawn upon in aligning Anuket with the name of Hathor in

TT 335, it may have been part of a wider sphere of associations through which the two goddesses were aligned with one another.

Taweret and Anuket can thus be demonstrated to have Hathoric connections, and therefore their scene appears to complete a pattern in which the deities depicted in the two northernmost scenes of the east and west walls align with the divinities named in the offering formula above. In doing so, the pairing of Anuket and Taweret expresses an identity relationship, as the two goddesses are identified with Hathor and with each other through her.

#### 4.5.3. Pairing and Multiplicity

Something different appears to be occurring in the depiction of Taweret and Anuket than is happening elsewhere in the burial chamber. This Hathoric panel is the only one of the four that relates two deities to the formula overhead. Furthermore, while the two goddesses are indeed connected to Hathor, they also possess their own distinct own personas, iconographies, and so on, unlike the gods in the other scenes that form part of the ‘labelling’ pattern.

The pairing of Taweret and Anuket therefore returns us to the idea of multiplicity, as discussed in relation to the palimpsest of goddesses evoked in the Pillar H compositions (see §2.3.4–5). The images of the two goddesses hold multiple associations simultaneously, which may in turn be expressed and re-articulated through their compositional relationship to one another. They stand together as counterparts, an arrangement that, as discussed in the analysis of the role above (§4.2.2), appears to preserve a visual impression of the members’ individual presence. The pairing of Taweret and Anuket might therefore show that a multiplicity of associations and persona can be

observed beyond the particularly fluid group of deities evoked on Pillar H in TT 106; it is perhaps a feature of goddesses' representation more broadly.

However, it might be countered that Taweret and Anuket are a pair of figures, and therefore not an exact parallel for the multiplicity of the Pillar H goddess. It is easy to argue for multiplicity if multiple figures are present. In order to show that representational fluidity can be a feature of female deities within pairs, and that it is a particularly female feature, we would need to provide an example where a goddess is paired with a god, exhibiting fluidity while he does not.

Such an example can be found by returning to TT 178 at el-Khokha. A scene on the west wall of the outer room depicts Neferrenpet and Mutemwia with their arms raised in praise before a table of offerings and a shrine (PM I:1<sup>2</sup>, 284; Hofmann 1995, pl. 24). The shrine contains Ptah, who sits upon a throne, and a goddess who stands behind him as a counterpart, wearing a headdress comprising cow horns and a sun disk (see Fig. 57). The goddess is identified in the caption above Neferrenpet and Mutemwia, which describes the couple as 'giving praise to Ptah, Perfect of Face, and kissing the earth (for) Hathor' (Hofmann 1995, 42 [Text 54]). She is clearly named as Hathor, an identification that aligns with her iconography. However, this identification does not appear to align with how the goddess is named in her own caption. A short vertical register is positioned in front of the figure's face, and while a hole in the plaster damages the text within, the tail of a cobra determinative is visible, indicating the name of a goddess. Hofmann has suggested that the text reads the name of Isis (1995, 43 [Text 56]).

Here we see a goddess figure, paired with a god, who is ascribed two identifications in different texts. A close association between Hathor and Isis is attested in the religious landscape of the Theban west bank; the previously cited stela of Penbuy from Deir el-Medina (Louvre E. 16374: see §2.3.5) depicts the syncretised Hathor-Isis in its

lower section. However, rather than a single syncretised name for the figure, the scene provides two simultaneous identifications. Two personas— closely interlinked (see Bleeker 1923, 70), yet each nonetheless possessing its own associations, mythologies, and cultic presence— co-exist within the same figure. It is possible that this simultaneous identification is facilitated by the figure’s iconography, since the horned headdress is also appropriate apparel for Isis in this period (see Frankfort 1978<sup>2</sup>, 44), as indicated by Nefertari’s coronation scene at Abu Simbel where the figures of Hathor and Isis both wear similar headdresses (see Fig. 26).

Both the TT 178 figure and the pairing of Taweret and Anuket appear to express multiplicity in the context of pairing. They achieve that multiplicity through different means— Taweret and Anuket through their ‘labelling’ as Hathor, the TT 178 figure through her captioning and iconography— yet both appear to utilise a fluidity between the figures depicted or evoked. Having identified such a blending or simultaneity of identities outside of the Pillar H figure, multiplicity and fluidity of representation might therefore be understood as a wider potential in the depiction of goddesses.

#### 4.5.4. Supra-beings, Superimposed: The Close Pairing of Goddess Figures

As noted in the initial description of the scene in TT 335, Anuket’s left arm is shown extending in front of Taweret’s body, meaning the two figures are overlapping. This is, in fact, just one example of a much wider phenomenon in the representation of goddesses, in which pairs of female deities are paired so closely that they overlap or are almost completely superimposed over each other. For the final part of this section, and of the discussion of pairing roles and the relationships they express, the phenomenon of close pairing is outlined as a mode of representation that is predominantly associated with female deities.

Overlapping pairs of goddesses can be found in many of the case studies presented in this thesis, as well in monuments from the wider data set and throughout Egyptian two-dimensional media. Furthermore, overlapping occurs among supporters and counterparts alike. In TT 178, where Isis and Nephthys stand supportively behind Osiris in the judgement scene in the outer room (PM I:1<sup>2</sup>, 284; Hofmann 1995, col. pl. 3a; see Fig. 58), the two goddesses are closely overlapped. Looking beyond Thebes, a fragment from Mose's Memphite chapel depicts two pairs of goddesses who stand together as counterparts; the figures of each pair are superimposed (PM III:2<sup>2</sup>, 554; Gaballa 1977, pl. 3–4; see Fig. 59). The phenomenon is also seen in funerary papyri, for instance in the vignette of BD Spell 125 in the 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty *Book of the Dead* of Ani, where Meskhenet and Renenet stand as an overlapping pair beside the scales of judgement (Dondelinger 1987, 49 pl. 4; see Fig. 60).

Meanwhile, superimposed pairs of gods are extremely rare. Where overlapping does occur among male deities, it is usually in groups of three or figures, for example on the north wall of TT 178's outer hall where two registers of superimposed gods praise the sun disk (PM I:1<sup>2</sup>, 284; Hofmann 1995, pl. 21). Furthermore, gods who *are* shown superimposed are often without distinct individual personas or iconographies. On the south wall of the Great Hypostyle Hall at Karnak, Ramesses II is depicted censuring before the barque of Amun, which is carried by the souls of Pe and Nekhen who appear in six rows of superimposed figures (PM II<sup>2</sup>, 47; Nelson 1981, pl. 53). These gods do not have individually distinguishing features, their identity is collective. Even gods who traditionally appear in groups, such as the four sons of Horus, do not usually overlap if they have individual identities and iconographies in addition to their collective presence. This is observable in the vignette of BD Spell 125, where the four sons of Horus often appear in miniature atop a lotus flower, yet in most instances they are individually

rendered rather than superimposed (Neville 1886, I, pl. 136; see Fig. 58). One of the very rare examples of close pairing between gods occurs in the judgement scene in the papyrus of Ani, where the gods Hu and Sia appear as an overlapping seated pair at the end of a register depicting the Heliopolitan Ennead (Dondelinger 1987, 49 pl. 3). This is not a standardised way of representing these gods in the weighing of the heart vignette, since the contemporaneous papyrus of Hunefer (BM EA 9901.3) depicts Hu and Sia as individually rendered deities, appearing consecutively in a sequence of squatting figures of the Ennead (Lüscher 2010, 302–3). However, in the vast majority of cases, gods with discernible personas are not shown overlapping. In contrast, most of the overlapping goddess figures cited above are named or have identifying iconographies.

The inability of many gods to be placed in overlapping pairs is likely due to the higher rates of conservational conservatism in their representation which, as discussed in previous sections, is a result of their position in hierarchies of representation. Egyptian compositional norms are formulated with male primacy as a central premise, therefore anything that might compromise that primacy is avoided or mitigated. To overlay an identifiable god with another figure is to detract from his prominence, thus it is almost never done. Since goddesses appear to generally be ranked lower than their male contemporaries in hierarchies of prominence and agency, such concerns do not exist for them in the same way, and so images of major deities are able to be overlapped and superimposed.

Yet these pairings are far more than just space saving measures, or dismissive acts on the part of the artists. The close pairing of goddess figures appears to be a meaningful representational choice. Many of the female deities rendered in this way are closely connected to the figures they appear with, whether through kinship, thematic, or identity relationships. The sisterhood of Isis and Nephthys is a core dimension of their personas.

Meskhenet and Renenet, who overlap in the Ani papyrus, have a close thematic link through ideas of birth (Beinlich-Seeber 1984, 233). Indeed, an equivalency between the overlapping of paired figures and their close interconnection may underlie the rare example of Hu and Sia in the papyrus of Ani. As personifications of divine utterance and perception, who are often depicted together (Bickel 1994, 101) and who unlike Heka seem to have remained abstract personifications without their own cults or priesthoods (Hornung 1982, 76), these two gods may have been conceptually inseparable to the extent that their figures could be layered. The close pairing of goddess figures cannot be dismissed as accidents of spatial organisation, or a thoughtless stacking of secondary figures; it is a conscious and meaningful representational choice.

By introducing the phenomenon of close pairing, the depiction of Taweret and Anuket in TT 335 is the culmination not only of the exploration of pairing and the roles used to achieve it, but of the interrogation of secondary status. In the first part of the chapter, the different compositional nuances of the typology's pairing roles were explored, as well as their statistical distributions in the data sets. These analyses suggest that local artistic traditions guided the use of pairing roles, as well as the ritual function of the space in which pairings were depicted. In the first of the case studies, the use of kin pairing to express extended persona in Abydos' Isis chapel demonstrated the pervasiveness of hierarchical gender relations, but also the possibilities that could be found within unequal power structures, since Isis' deeply important relationship with Osiris was able to be expressed in a way that would likely be impossible for a god in his own chapel. The thematic pairing of Maat and Ptah, as exemplified by the stela of Ramose in the Manchester Museum, showed how even when the position of goddesses is undoubtedly secondary, their roles can still be important for the generation of meaning, and therefore hierarchical gender relations should not be oversimplified to those who have agency and

those who are inert. Finally, the identity pairing of Taweret and Anuket illustrated once more the multiplicity that is possible in goddesses' representation, and furthermore indicated the existence of a highly meaningful form of representation that is largely reserved for goddesses. Significantly, close pairing can be understood as stemming from goddesses' secondary status in compositional hierarchies. It seems that, within pairings—whether based upon kinship, thematic links, or interrelated identities—goddesses can carve out spaces for themselves in which to exercise modes of agency that are their own, even within unequal structures.

## 5. Collective Agents or Recipients

### 5.1. Introduction to Chapter 5

The final broad compositional setting in which goddesses appear is within groups of deities, defined here as a collection of three or more figures. The proposed typology of roles designates the goddesses who are depicted in such contexts as ‘collective agents or recipients’, since they act or are worshiped simultaneously with their contemporaries as a single unit. The members of such groups usually face the same direction, are often the same size or enact similar poses, and they might even be addressed collectively by a depicted ritual officiant. It will become clear that groups of deities are formed according to standard patterns, and therefore gender dynamics are incorporated into the structures of these groups in largely consistent ways. This penultimate chapter is therefore of shorter length than its predecessors, since it primarily serves to provide an overview of these patterns, through which the secondary status of goddesses is encoded into most multi-gender groups. Unlike multi-gender pairs, in which goddesses in secondary positions might still exercise their own forms of agency, it will be shown that the collective agents of multi-gender groups are often visually subsumed by their compositional contexts, and thus their agency in those scenes is neutralised. There are, however, rare exceptions to this norm, the examination of which allows us to consider the pervasiveness of standard group gender dynamics by looking beyond their borders.

The following section of the chapter outlines the contexts of collective agents (§5.2), both in terms of their attestations across the data sets and the compositional arrangements in which they are often situated. The subsequent section notes the unequal gender dynamics observable within these groups by describing the organisational techniques that are used to achieve those dynamics (§5.3). In doing so, it is argued that

some multi-gender groups function as microcosms of divine society, with ideas about that society's hierarchical structuring crystallised into them. The resultant inequality of most multi-gender groups may underlie an apparent avoidance of them in monumental contexts that centre goddesses. Finally, the chapter is closed with a discussion of the recurrent grouping of Qadesh, Min, and Reshep in stelae from Deir el-Medina, using one of the stelae of Ramose (Museo Egizio 50066: RCat. 6) as an example (§5.4). The compositional organisation of this group stands in stark opposition to the norms of female secondariness that are operative in most divine collectives. However, in acknowledging and considering the nature of these exceptions, it is suggested that aspects of Qadesh's representation may contain echoes of more standard gender dynamics. The presence of those echoes, even in such an apparently exceptional case, may speak to the deep-rooted position of hierarchical gender structures in methods of depicting multi-gender groups.

## 5.2. The Contexts of Collective Agents and Recipients

### 5.2.1. Attestations of Collective Agents

Before describing the compositional settings in which collective agents appear, a picture should first be sketched of how the role is represented across the data sets. Turning to the Theban sample, rates of attestation are highly skewed, more so than any other role of the typology. Collective agents or recipients make up a median average of 0% of a tomb's goddess figures, yet also claim a mean average of 21% (see Chart 1). Such a large negative skew reflects that collective agents occur relatively rarely compared to roles such as individual agents or supporters, yet where they do appear, their numbers lean towards the higher end of the range of attestations, and thus they tend to constitute a large proportion of that monument's goddess images.

Meanwhile, in the sample of Memphite tombs, the rates of attestation for collective agents are once more skewed, though less dramatically than in the Theban sample. Goddesses depicted in this role account for a median average of 30% of a Memphite tomb's female divine images, and a mean average of 21% (see Chart 2). This positive skew, which is significantly smaller than the negative skew in the Theban sample, indicates that attestations of collective agents in individual Memphite tombs tend toward the lower end of the range of possible values, as can be seen in their attestations in individual tombs (see Table 2); where collective agents appear, they make up between 30 and 33% of goddess images in a monument, with the skew in rates of attestation introduced by the tomb of Tia and Tia, where collective agents account for 53% of goddess figures.

While it is difficult to make any firm deductions based on such varied data, one might note that collective agents are more consistently attested in Memphite tombs as a significant proportion of goddess figures, while at Thebes they appear more sporadically. Such a trend may suggest that differences in the representation of collective agents could be part of the Theban/Memphite artistic distinctions proposed in the previous chapter (§4.2.2), yet this should remain a cautious suggestion since the distinction between the data sets is perhaps not so apparent here as in the use of pairing roles.

The attestation of collective agents also varies across the temple case studies. At the Small Temple of Abu Simbel, the role accounts for just 5% of goddess figures (see Chart 8). Similarly, in the second hypostyle hall of Seti I's Abydos temple, only 2% of goddess figures are depicted as collective agents, with the role claiming 10% of the goddess images in the chapel of Isis (see Chart 5). However, turning to the Great Hypostyle Hall at Karnak, collective agents account for 28% of goddess figures (see Chart 13), the second most-represented role after counterparts. The division between Abu Simbel

and Abydos on the one hand, and Karnak on the other, is reminiscent of variations in the attestation of counterparts in those same environments (see §4.2.2). In the previous chapter it was argued that the higher number of counterparts at Karnak were largely due to recurrence of Amun in many of the scenes. Would a similar explanation account for disparities in the number of group settings? Or might these variances be due to an avoidance of such contexts in contexts where goddesses should be prominent? These questions might be addressed by examining the compositional arrangements in which collective agents are depicted, and the dynamics of status that are present within them.

### 5.2.2. The Compositional Settings of Collective Agents and Recipients

Collective agents and recipients appear in groups of various structures and sizes, some of which might be bespoke to an individual composition while others are recurrent motifs across monuments. Some motifs are specifically associated with funerary contexts, while others are more associated with temple settings, though there are interrelations between these contexts. The arrangements are described below, with illustrative examples.

The groups of deities that are depicted in tomb decoration might be sorted into two broad categories. The first concerns groups that are effectively transposed from the vignettes of afterlife books, recurring in multiple tombs and whose memberships remain fairly consistent. The second consists of groups who either do not come from afterlife books, or who are not transposed so directly, seeming to have greater freedom in which deities can be depicted and in what arrangements. Both categories of group can be informative about gender dynamics. The groups that closely reproduce or reflect afterlife books will have relatively fixed memberships, and perhaps more firmly established arrangements or orders for those figures. However, there are variations, and the ways in which such variations occur might be illustrative of underlying structures or conceptions of

the group. Meanwhile, groups that do not reproduce afterlife books so directly are perhaps more at liberty to decide which figures are depicted, and in what arrangement. Such contexts might therefore allow the observation of group gender dynamics being actively constructed.

A recurrent example of a group of the first category is taken from BD Spell 146 and depicts the guardians of the gates of the *Duat* (Naville 1886, I, pl. 155). A version of the scene is found in TT 106, where Paser kneels before two registers of portals and their guardians (PM I:1<sup>2</sup>, 222; MMA Photo T2912). While the guardians occupy their own small vignettes arranged into a sequence, and are sometimes depicted as the sole figure guarding their own doorway, they are addressed simultaneously and thus have been characterised here as collective agents. The understanding of the guardians as a collective is supported by the depiction of them in one of the two tombs of Inherkhau at Deir el-Medina (TT 359: PM I:1<sup>2</sup>, 422), where they are shown as a single register of seated figures on a bench at the west end of the outer chamber (Cherpion and Corteggiani 2010, II, 16–7). Another recurring *Book of the Dead* motif is the weighing of the heart scene from BD Spell 125 (Naville 1886, I, pl. 136). Versions of the scene often include a depiction of the overseeing tribunal of gods and goddesses, such as in the outer room of TT 178 (PM I:1<sup>2</sup>, 284, Hofmann 1995, pl. 15), and on a fragment from the Memphite tomb of Hormin (see Gaballa 1977, pl. 40). Both depict a register of deities above the action of the weighing ceremony.

Other groups from the *Book of the Dead* occur, though less frequently than the examples above. One such group comes from the vignette of BD Spell 148, in which the deceased seeks sustenance and protection in the afterlife by appealing to the seven cows, ‘the Bull of the *Duat*’, and the four rudders of the sky which appear behind the group of bovine figures (Naville 1886, I, pl. 167). The motif occurs twice in the Memphite sample,

once on the rear wall of Room II in the tomb of Mose (PM III:2<sup>2</sup>, 554; Gaballa 1977, pl. 20; shown in §1.5.2) where the figures are arranged into three registers. The second occurrence is on the south wall of the Apis chapel in the tomb of Tia and Tia (Martin 1997, 31, pl. 47) where only the lower section of a single register is preserved. The Mose example of BD Spell 148 is returned to in the following section of the chapter, as example of the structures and, sometimes, tensions that might be operational in multi-gender groups.

Another possible form of grouping places divine figures in tabular arrangements, an unusual example of which can be seen once again in TT 359 (PM I:1<sup>2</sup>, 423). On the east wall of the tomb's inner chamber carries a version of the litany of the parts of the body from BD Spell 42 (Lapp 2017, 160–277; Naville 1886, I, pl. 61–2), which is presented as a table whose cells contain small images of the deities associated with each body part (Cherpion and Corteggiani 2010, II, 73 pl. 112, 76 pl. 116). The composition mirrors a similar one on the opposite side of the vaulted ceiling, in which the 'Negative Confessions' of BD Spell 125 (see Lapp 2008) are written in a table. Each cell contains a confession, and an associated male divinity wearing a feather on his head (Cherpion and Corteggiani 2010, II, 46 pl. 72, 50 pl. 77, 59 pl. 86). The table is rendered with door panels on either side, as if it were an open shrine in which the seated gods are housed together. This suggests that the gods should be understood as a single group, despite the table's internal dividing lines, an interpretation that probably also applies to the version of BD Spell 42 opposite.

Groups that are not directly taken (or are perhaps flexibly extrapolated) from afterlife books are less common than scenes from the *Book of the Dead*, but they are nonetheless attested. Some of these groups are made up of generic divine figures, who have no identifying iconography or are not named in captions. One such group appears in a

previously cited scene in the outer room of TT 178, where two registers of anthropomorphic gods accompany Neferrenpet in praising the sun disk (PM I:1<sup>2</sup>, 284; Hofmann 1995, pl. 21; see §4.2.2; Fig. 61). There is no caption that names the group, nor are they referenced in what remains of the solar hymn spoken by Neferrenpet to the right of the scene. Hofmann identifies them as representatives of the souls of Pe and Nekhen, the *rekhyt*, and the *henmemet* (1995, 39–40), likely due to the scene’s resemblance to the sunrise vignette of BD Spell 16 (Naville 1886, I, pl. 21–2). The generic nature of these gods may add a significant dimension to their function, as will be discussed shortly.

Another group that contains generic divinities– and might be placed in the ‘flexible extrapolation’ subcategory– occurs in TT 1. On the west wall of the decorated burial chamber, the deceased and his wife are shown worshipping outside of a shrine that contains two registers of deities (PM I:1<sup>2</sup>, 3; Bruyère 1959, pl. 31; Shedid 1994, 72; see Fig. 62). The god at the head of the upper register exhibits the iconography of Osiris, and the equivalent figure on the lower register bears the falcon head and sun disk of Ra-Horakhty. These identifications are supported by references to those gods in a horizontal band of text that forms the divide between the two rows of deities. The text itself is identified by Mohamed Saleh as an instructional rubric to some versions of BD Spells 133 or 148, one that occurs rarely in papyri and of which the TT 1 version appears to be the only example used in tomb decoration (Saleh 1986, 90). However, as also noted by Saleh, the TT 1 scene is not a direct reproduction of the very few other versions of the text that are accompanied by a vignette (*ibid.*), an adaptation that comes in part through the number, form, and ordering of the deities who follow Osiris and Ra-Horakhty, these being eleven generic divinities distributed between the two registers. Some of these divinities are shown with beards, a feature consistently attributed to anthropomorphic gods in the tomb’s other scenes, while others are not shown with beards. The deities have therefore been understood

as a collection of gods and goddesses. As with the figures of the ‘sunrise’ scene in TT 178, these deities are not given individual identifications.

In groups such as those in TT 178 and TT 1, the neutral iconography of generic figures— together with their lack of individual names— appears to evoke the idea of a group without specifying its exact members. Contexts such as these are perhaps the clearest illustrations of an apparent function of certain group contexts, one that has repercussions for any gendered structures that might be observed within them. Groups of deities can be used to evoke the divine multitude, to act as visual microcosms of the wider society of gods and goddesses. A group might be shown to function in this way by how it is described in the surrounding texts, for instance in the TT 1 example. Sennedjem and Inyeferti, in worshiping the deities housed in the shrine, address their praises to ‘all the gods of the *Duat*’ (Bruyère 1959, 56.F), a general population of deities that is perhaps incorporated into the group through the neutral iconography of the squatting gods and goddesses.

A multitudinous impression can also be created visually, through the treatment of a group’s figures, as might be seen in the TT 178 example. As noted above, the group is divided into two registers; the upper register contains three figures, and the lower contains seven. The seven gods of the lower register are grouped into two overlapped groups of three to the left and right of the register, with a single figure standing between them. The organisation of these figures, which utilises the technique of superimposition that is possible for groups of gods without defined individual personas (see §4.5.4), creates several interrelating fields of compositional depth. The effect may be purposefully disorienting, leaving the viewer with the impression that many figures are present in the group, rather than just ten. Whether the generic figures of the TT 178 scene are intended to signify the divine realm in a general sense, or whether they do represent the *henmemet* and others as

Hofmann suggests, they have been rendered in a manner that evokes an expansive plurality of deities, a wider divine landscape encapsulated in a single compositional unit. As will be suggested in the sections of the chapter to follow, this microcosmic function of some divine collectives appears to intersect with structural gender dynamics within groups of deities.

The collective agents and recipients of temple decoration tend to appear in somewhat different settings. Instead of being depicted in groups drawn from the *Book of the Dead*, the collective agents in temple contexts most often occur within triads, enneads, or other larger groups of deities who often participate in some form of ritual action alongside the king. These units are briefly outlined here, moving from smallest to largest.

Triads, as noted by Hornung (1982, 218–9), are often formulated along genealogical lines, comprising a father god, a mother goddess, and their child. Yet the nuclear family model is not universally applicable; in some instances it may even have functioned more as an organisational metaphor that joined three locally important deities, without necessarily having any previous mythological basis. For example, according to Hornung, Ptah and Sekhmet were worshiped together as consorts long before Nefertem became associated with them as their son (Hornung 1982, 218). According to the material from Elephantine presented by Dominique Valbelle, Khnum did not join with Satet and Anuket to form a triad until the Middle Kingdom, and even then Anuket did not assume the role of a child deity, certainly not before the Late Period (Valbelle 1981, 5, 69; see also Griffiths 1996, 81–2). J. Gwyn Griffiths noted that, while some triads comprise deities of a single gender, all-female triads appear rarer than all-male ones (Griffiths 1996, 83–6). This discrepancy is suggestive of a gendered dimension of triads as a form of representation, that is discussed further below (§5.3.2).

Looking to the larger groups featured in temple decoration, enneads are distinguished from other collections of deities by a relative lack of flexibility or permeability in their size and membership. Enneads are crystallised groups of gods and goddesses, occurring in consistent numbers, and therefore maintaining the same gender demographics. However, different depictions of the same ennead are not always structured in the same way. For example, the Great Ennead of Thebes— consisting of the nine Heliopolitan deities with the addition of Montu, Horus, Hathor, Sobek, Tjenenet, and Iunyt (Brunner 1982, 475)— appears as a single compositional unit on three occasions in the wall scenes of Karnak’s Great Hypostyle Hall (PM II<sup>2</sup>, 45–7). While the Great Ennead is a fixed group, the poses and arrangement of its members vary between the three scenes. On the south half of the west wall (PM II<sup>2</sup>, 46), the group is depicted in three registers of standing figures with their arms raised in praise, the figures separated from one another by bands of text recording their names and speech (Nelson 1981, pl. 36; see Fig. 63). On the west half of the south wall (PM II<sup>2</sup>, 47), they appear in four registers of seated figures in unbroken sequences, their knees overlapping one another (Nelson 1981, pl. 52). Finally, above a doorway on the east side of the north wall (PM II<sup>2</sup>, 45), the deities of the Ennead are once again seated, but in three registers of singular figures or overlapped pairs, each unit separated by bands containing the names and speech of those depicted (Nelson 1981, pl. 201). Each of these versions of the Great Ennead is rendered differently, yet their members are always ordered in the same sequence. Enneads can therefore be characterised as set groups with crystallised relationships between its members, yet there is some compositional flexibility in how those members are arranged.

In contrast, other kinds of group can vary the deities they depict, their numbers, and therefore their gender demographics, even if that group constitutes an established motif. Remaining in the Great Hypostyle Hall, there are two scenes within the space that feature

the souls of Pe and Nekhen. One, on the west half of the south wall (PM II<sup>2</sup>, 47), depicts the barque of Amun being carried by three rows of hawk-headed gods (the souls of Pe) and another three with jackal heads (the souls of Nekhen; Nelson 1981, pl. 53). The other, on the east half of the south wall (PM II<sup>2</sup>, 48), shows the king in the centre of a group of deities who lead him into the temple; he is immediately bracketed by Wadjet and Nekhbet, beyond whom to the left are three souls of Pe while to the right are three souls of Nekhen (Nelson 1981, pl. 62; see Fig. 64). This scene is paralleled on the east wall of the second court in Ramesses III's temple at Medinet Habu (PM II<sup>2</sup>, 500; Epigraphic Survey 1940, pl. 235), and may thus represent a fixed grouping, yet comparison with the barque scene nonetheless demonstrates a plasticity in how the souls of Pe and Nekhen can be rendered, and thus how they might be incorporated into groups with other deities. Therefore, the choices of how and where goddesses are incorporated into such contexts— their numbers, placement, actions, and so on— may reveal underlying conceptions about the roles and agencies of goddesses in group settings.

### 5.3. No Companies of Equals: Gender Dynamics within Groups of Deities

#### 5.3.1. Groups Contexts and Gender Hierarchy in Tomb Decoration

Groups of deities are often rendered with their members being the same size, perhaps in the same orientation, and carrying out the same action. One might therefore expect that the goddesses who are depicted as collective agents in multi-gender groups would have equal agency with their male contemporaries. Such a line of thinking holds that where agency is on the group level, it must surely be distributed equally among its members, regardless of gender. However, closer inspection of the examples cited above demonstrate that many

such groups are far from egalitarian, preserving and perhaps even exemplifying the gendered dynamics of status observed throughout this thesis.

The existence of gendered structures within group contexts soon becomes evident when examining the funerary material. Returning to TT 1, the shrine of deities depicted on the west wall of the burial chamber contains both gods and goddesses, each of the two registers being organised into an alternating sequence of male and female figures (see Fig. 62). However, the ratio of goddesses to gods is not equal, with five female deities to eight male figures. The numerical imbalance results from the placement of Osiris and Ra-Horakhty at the front of the registers, after which the alternating pattern of god and goddess figures begins. Both the upper and lower registers therefore depict two gods before a goddess appears. Not only does this use of patterning make female deities numerically secondary, but it also creates a visual impression of male primacy within the group. While the ‘gods of the *Duat*’ in the shrine consist of both male and female deities, they appear to the viewer as a collective dominated by gods.

A secondary position for collective agents in tomb decoration appears to be maintained even where goddesses have prominent placements within their group. Returning to TT 359, a fragmentary scene on the southeast wall of the outer chamber depicts the owner and his wife worshiping before two registers of deified kings, queens, and princes (PM I:1<sup>2</sup>, 422; Cherpion and Corteggiani 2010, II, 20–5 pl. 31–40). The lower register is headed by a female figure, whose black skin indicates to be Ahmose-Nefertari (see Gitton 1981<sup>2</sup>, 74–5). While her position at the head of a register is a prestigious one, hers is nonetheless the lower register. According to Robins, the lower registers of compositions are generally less prestigious than higher ones (1994, 36). Robins’ observation echoes Assmann’s assertion that the Ramessid introduction of the ‘vertical axis’ to decorative organisation allowed scenes of divine interaction to be placed above

representations of the funeral and the mortuary cult on the same walls (Assmann 1987, 35; see §1.4.1). The connection between a figure's elevation and their status therefore appears to have been particularly strong and active in the Ramessid period, suggesting that while Ahmose-Nefertari occupies a prestigious position befitting her importance to the community of Deir el-Medina (e.g. El Shazly 2015, 205–14), her secondary position is nonetheless maintained through vertical hierarchy.

Examples of multi-gender groups in which goddesses are not numerically secondary, and where they might even take precedence over gods, are very rare. A possible example has, however, already been introduced within this chapter, namely the version of BD Spell 148 from the tomb of Mose (see §5.2.2; shown in §1.5.2). The Bull of the *Duat* is depicted at the head of the lower register, in front of the last of the seven cows. If following Robins and Assmann in understanding lower registers as equating to lower status, then the god appears to occupy a subordinate position in relation to the goddesses above him. His placement is guided by the text of the spell, in which the deceased addresses the seven cows before the Bull of the *Duat* (Neville 1886, II, 377–8).

However, the Bull's position in the scene cannot be explained purely through order of textual appearance. If it could, then the bull would be depicted after the seventh and final cow, rather than in front of her. Given the usual practice of placing male figures in more prominent positions than their female contemporaries, something that has recurred throughout the material examined by this thesis, it seems likely that the Mose version of BD Spell 148 represents the negotiation of a tension between two representational priorities. Firstly, that the seven divine cows should be prominent, and secondly that gods should occupy the most prestigious positions, in group contexts and as a general rule. A compromise seems to have been reached by placing six of the seven cows in the two upper registers, while moving the Bull of the *Duat* ahead of the seventh cow in his register,

adhering to standard compositional arrangements that usually place male figures in front of females. It appears that where Theban and Memphite private tombs depict multi-gender groups of deities, representational mechanisms ensure either that goddesses retain their secondary position, or else that the primacy of male figures is not wholly threatened by female prominence. Even among gods, masculinity is fragile.

### 5.3.2. The Use and Avoidance of Groups in Temple Contexts

In temple decoration, enneads and other large groups exhibit similar internal patterning as can be observed in the funerary material. All three occurrences of the Great Ennead at Karnak, for example, present the group in a different formation, yet the order of appearance for the group's members remains consistent. Montu is placed at the head, followed by the classic Heliopolitan ennead of Atum, Shu, Tefnut, etc., with the rear section containing Horus, Hathor, Sobek, Tjenenet, and Iunyt (Nelson 1981, pl. 36, 52, 201; see Fig. 63). The Great Ennead is therefore led by three gods, the third of whom begins an alternating pattern of male and female deities. The sequence is arranged into generational pairs of consorts, and in the ordering of those consorts satisfies the compositional norm that husbands should come before wives (Robins 1994, 33). One more god is then added, before the group is closed by two goddesses who bring up the rear.

The core of the collective is the Heliopolitan ennead, itself a fixed unit, yet the inclusion other deities to form this Theban variant, and their placement within the new group, has several effects. The Great Ennead contains eight gods and seven goddesses, making female figures numerically secondary to the males, even if marginally. While there is only one more male deity than female, the patterning of figures seems to foreground male presence. Three gods are depicted before a goddess appears, and the alternating pattern of male and female figures terminates with two goddess, creating the visual

impression that the presence of gods is weighted towards the front (i.e. more prestigious) end of the group, while goddesses are concentrated at the back. Though the goddesses and gods of the Great Ennead are almost equal in number, to the viewer, male presence may appear to be the dominant dynamic within the group. Like the enshrined gods of the *Duat* in TT 1, the Great Ennead and other groups like it are not egalitarian collectives.

Similar mechanisms are identifiable in other large groups, such as the tableau on the south wall of the Great Hypostyle Hall that shows the king being led by two goddesses and the souls of Pe and Nekhen (see Fig. 64). The goddesses appear on either side of the king, bracketing his figure, and therefore occupy a central position within the group. However, this centrality seems to be mediated by the fact they are outnumbered by male deities three times over, being visually subsumed by the gods who flank them on either side. The use of spatial arrangements to reconcile female prominence with male primacy is once again reminiscent of strategies observable in tomb decoration, such as in TT 359 where vertical hierarchy appears to mediate Ahmose-Nefertari's position at the head of a register.

The reconciliation of female prominence and male primacy seems integral to the depiction of collective agents across contexts, indeed to the representation of goddesses in general. It is a representational concern that appears to be so wide-reaching that it extends from wall scenes and into other media, as exemplified by a fragmentary votive stela photographed in Bruyère's 1935–40 report of excavations at Deir el-Medina (Bruyère 1948–52, II, 120 fig. 201; see Fig. 65). The stela's upper section carries a scene depicting two symmetrically opposed groups of deities, each containing four figures and facing inwards toward the centre of the object. The left-hand group contains the figures of Amun, Mut, Khonsu, and another goddess whose caption and upper body are now lost, while the right-hand group contains Meretseger as the Goddess of the West, Ptah 'Lord of Maat',

Amenhotep I, and Ahmose-Nefertari. The right-hand group is a rare example in which a divine collective features a goddess in primary position yet is also depicted on the same register as a god-led group. Meretseger and her group are not subordinated through vertical hierarchy.

However, the goddess' position is not equal in prominence to that of Amun on the opposite side of the stela. According to Robins, the most prestigious figures within a self-contained composition— such as a stela— are usually right-facing, and are therefore positioned on the left-hand side of a scene (1994, 33–6). The group led by Meretseger is on the right of the stela and is left-facing. Meretseger's group therefore occupies the less prestigious side of the register, allowing her heightened prominence to be reconciled with wider dynamics of male compositional dominance. And yet, as has been observed on other occasions where goddesses are placed in secondary positions, this negotiation of status seems to provide a representational opportunity, in the form of an organisational play. The members of the right-hand group are associated with the Theban west bank, while the left-hand group contains the triad of Karnak whose main cult centres are on the east bank. Since the term *imnt*/west can also refer to the direction 'right' (TLA lemma-no. 26140) and *ibbt*/east to 'left' (TLA lemma-no. 20570), the positioning of the groups might interact with the identities of the deities themselves to evoke the Theban religious landscape.

Like the other kinds of grouping that occur in temple decoration, triads also tend to place goddesses in secondary positions. Griffiths noted that 'the extreme rarity of the all-female triad is consonant with the lower status of goddesses in triads generally' (1996, 86), with many family-based triads having a double masculine element by featuring a father and a son. Furthermore, due to the rules of compositional dominance observed by Robins, goddesses in such contexts are unlikely to advance beyond second position within the group. While Griffiths' comments may perhaps be generalising, they are largely borne out

by the material examined by this study. Indeed, the presented analyses move Griffith's interpretations a step further.

Examples of triads in which goddesses take precedence over male members are extremely rare. One of the few examples encountered by the author appears on an 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty stela from Deir el-Medina, recorded in the second volume of Bruyère's report of the 1935–40 excavations (Bruyère 1948–52, II, 140 fig. 228). All members of the group are shown seated, with Hathor assuming primary position with Amenhotep I and Ahmose-Nefertari following up behind. These deified royals were, as already alluded to, highly important figures in the religious life of the workers' community (El Shazly 2015, 205–14), yet they might nonetheless be understood as a lower level of deity than Hathor. Her occupation of the group's most prestigious position might therefore be enabled by the absence of a major god, making this stela an exception that proves the rule. Triads appear to be largely male-oriented modes of divine representation, as are enneads and other large groups.

Griffith's interpretations are further supported by the identified discrepancies in the occurrence of triads in the temple case studies. Triads frequently appear in the god-focused wall scenes of Karnak's Great Hypostyle Hall; the Theban triad appears as a sequential unit of figures or barques on 13 occasions (Nelson 1981, pl. 12, 36, 38, 43, 48, 53, 76, 79, 152, 178, 180, 197, 222). Meanwhile, in the goddess-oriented Small Temple at Abu Simbel, there are just two triads, only one of which contains goddess figures, this being the triad of Elephantine on the north end of the east wall of the vestibule (PM VII, 116; DK 1968, II, pl. 112, 114).

The dearth of triads at Abu Simbel occurs in the context of a low number of groups in that temple and at Abydos (see Chart 5, 8). Since it has been shown that group contexts entail an almost default secondariness for goddesses in most cases, it seems probable that

triads and the role of collective agent in general are purposefully avoided in these monuments. The Small Temple is dedicated to a goddess and centres female prominence in its decorative programme, therefore the status dynamics of multi-gender groups are inappropriate. Similar considerations may be at work in the areas of Abydos associated with Isis. The collective agents of the Isis chapel appear in the form of the goddess' barques, which are accompanied by two divine standards of herself (each captioned with speech), along with a figure of the king (PM VI, 16–7; Calverley et al. 1935, pl. 19, 22). It is possible that Isis' barque entourage mostly consists of goddesses since to introduce a major god might entail that she should take a secondary position. As in the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty stela cited above, Seti is probably able to be present, and to be shown at the back of the group, because he is royalty. Such concerns would have been irrelevant in Karnak's Great Hypostyle Hall, which not only has a single god as its occupying deity, but places that god in a position of absolute primacy; any triad that Amun appears in, he is at the head of. Therefore, the findings of this research not only support Griffith's interpretations, but they suggest that the ancient artists themselves were aware of the unequal gender dynamics of triads and other multi-gender groups, and adjusted accordingly when designing decorative programmes for spaces dedicated to goddesses.

It has been shown that the groups of deities that feature in temple and tomb settings exhibit similar gender dynamics, and they utilise similar organisational techniques in order to create and maintain them. Goddesses portrayed as collective agents overwhelmingly occupy secondary positions, and strategic uses of number, patterning, and spatial positioning reconcile instances of female prominence with overarching ideals of male primacy. It has also been argued that groups of deities can function as microcosms of the divine multitude; the structures and dynamics identified within such groups appear to encode gender hierarchy into the very fabric of that multitude, suggesting that a secondary

position for goddesses was understood to be inherent within the society of the divine. Indeed, the images that portrayed this hierarchical society of deities would themselves have perpetuated the idea of it. Alfred Gell's theory of artistic works as indexes of agency holds that visual media motivates inferences within the viewer (Gell 1998, ix), thereby helping to form the viewer's understandings and beliefs. This perpetuation of goddesses' secondary status might take on a very literal dimension in an Egyptian cultural context, in which tombs and temples are generative environments whose decoration has the power to create and to eternalise. For these reasons, multi-gender groups seem to have been avoided or reduced in monumental contexts dedicated to goddesses.

#### 5.4. Staring Us in the Face: The Exceptional Case of Qadesh

##### 5.4.1. 'Of Whom There Is No Equal': Museo Egizio 50066 and its Context

The secondary position of goddesses within the gender hierarchies of divine groups appears to be almost universal. However, there is a striking set of exceptions which form the basis of the final section of the chapter, these being depictions of the goddess Qadesh with Min and Reshep. An example of the group occurs on one of the votive stelae of Ramose, which is used as a central example in the following discussions. In doing so, the nature of Qadesh's seemingly exceptional prominence is outlined, possible explanations for it suggested, and finally it is considered whether echoes of the more usual dynamics of group gender hierarchy may still be detectable in some examples of the Qadesh stelae.

Museo Egizio 50066 (previously 1601: RCat. 6; see Fig. 66) is a round-topped stela with painted relief decoration, measuring about 45cm in height (PM I:2<sup>2</sup>, 733; *KRI* III, 621; Tosi and Roccati 1972, 102–3, 290; Cornelius 2004, 124 Cat 5.3, pl. 5.3). Qadesh, a goddess of West Semitic origin (see Cornelius 2004, 94–5), occupies the central position of the stela's lunette. She stands naked on a lion, a lunar disk on her head, and her figure

is rendered frontally, facing out towards the viewer. In her right hand she holds a bouquet of flowers, while in her left she holds a snake. In the left of the lunette (on Qadesh's right side) stands Min in his standard ithyphallic form. On the right of the lunette (Qadesh's left) is the West Semitic god Reshep (see Münnich 2013), who carries a spear in one hand and a bladed weapon in the other. Both gods face inwards toward Qadesh at the centre of the lunette. Beneath the group, in the lower section of the stela, are the kneeling figures of Ramose and Mutemwia, while above them is a text containing the names and epithets of the depicted deities, arranged into vertical columns. The three central columns, above the figure of Qadesh, name the goddess as 'Qadesh, Lady of the Sky, mistress of all the gods, the Eye of Ra, of whom there is no equal' (*KRI* III, 621.5). This object is just one of a wider group of stelae, all of which depict these same deities in the same positions, usually with almost identical iconography. Izak Cornelius presents ten such stelae in his iconographic analysis of Qadesh and other West Semitic goddesses (2004, 104, 123–6, Cat 5.1–10). Most of these, including the Ramose stela, are attributable to Deir el-Medina, though one example in the Cairo Museum (JE 45535; Cornelius 2004, 126, Cat 5.10) is provenanced to Memphis.

A possible function for these stelae is suggested by the shared association of the three deities with the desert and its dangers. Cornelius has shown that previous scholars' assumption that Qadesh was a fertility or love goddess is one based solely on her nakedness; while she may indeed have power over those areas, she is invoked in dedicatory inscriptions as a provider of health and wellbeing, and she is also associated with animals and the natural world (Cornelius 2004, 97–8). Meanwhile, Youri Volokhine notes that both Min and Reshep are connected to desert tracks and 'the world of the margins' (2000, 67). Min's cult centre of Koptos was located near important roads to the mines and quarries of the eastern desert (Baines and Málek 1984, 19, 111), and Maciej

Münnich argues that the gazelle often featured on Reshep's crown (as in the Ramose example) indicates his ability to inflict and protect from pestilence, given that animal's habitation of the unfriendly desert margins (Münnich 2013, 119). It is therefore possible that this group of deities, and the stelae they appeared upon, served an apotropaic function, protecting their donors from the dangers such as wild animals and illness that were seen to proliferate in the desert. The presence of these dangers may have been keenly felt by the community of Deir el-Medina, who lived and worked in the desert foothills. This, together with the generally higher rates of preservation in the area, might help explain the concentration of these stelae at the workers' village.

The apotropaic understanding of the group problematises an interpretation of Museo Egizio 50066, and of Ramose's votive practices more generally, that surfaces at several points in the wider literature. There is recurrent notion in discussions of Ramose and the material associated with him that he was childless, and that the numerous stelae he commissioned represent a desperate attempt to garner divine favour so that he and Mutemwia might be blessed with descendants. Ramose did indeed adopt Qenherkhepeshef as his successor, yet authors such as Davies (1999, 81–2) and Valbelle (2002, 62) have cited that adoption as evidence that Ramose dedicated stelae to goddesses such as Taweret, Hathor, and Qadesh in order to secure a biological heir. Davies makes the claim in particularly emotive terms, stating that Ramose's monuments 'betray the dichotomy of an affluent man, effective and content in the work-place, but forever in turmoil at home over the inability to produce an heir and eventual successor' (1999, 81).

However, the stelae themselves does not support such an interpretation, since the dedicatory texts— including those that invoke deities often perceived as 'mother goddesses'— make no mention of children. Instead, the most frequent request that Ramose makes to goddesses is for 'a good burial after old age' (see RCat. 1, 5, 7), where a request

occurs at all. One of these occurrences is on the stela dedicated to Taweret (Voronezh D-156: *KRI* III 626–7; see §2.3.5) whose associations with childbirth (e.g. Sadek 1988, 125) might make this stela the most likely candidate to carry a request for children. Instead, it appears that if Taweret is invoked to facilitate any form of birth, it is *rebirth* into the next world. Finally, and not insignificantly, other examples of Qadesh stelae were dedicated by individuals who are known to have had children; the fine example dedicated by the chief craftsman Qeh (BM EA 191: PM I:2<sup>2</sup>, 723; *KRI* III, 603; Cornelius 2004, 104, 123, Cat 1.1/5.1) depicts the owner in its lower section, accompanied by his wife and son. Therefore, a desire for children should not be included in the interpretation of Ramose's Qadesh stela, and furthermore cannot be supported as an explanation for his wider votive practices.

#### 5.4.2. Qadesh: An Exceptional Outsider

Museo Egizio 50066, and other stelae like it, represent a striking exception to the usual gender dynamics within groups of deities described in this chapter. Indeed, the compositions are so unusual in the wider milieu of Egyptian two-dimensional representation that they test the models developed to examine that material. The latter point pertains to the organisation of the group. The proposed typology of roles identifies a group of deities as having a communal presence and collective agency if they are depicted as a single compositional unit, meaning that they usually occur in the same part of a scene, often face the same direction, and act or are worshiped together. The figures depicted on Qadesh stelae occupy different positions and have different orientations, and might therefore appear more like an associated set of individual agents. However, since the three deities recur together in a consistent arrangement, and (as discussed in the next subsection)

several examples appear to depict an interaction between the figures, the deities of these Qadesh stelae are presented here as a group, and Qadesh as a collective agent.

The striking aspect of Qadesh on these objects, in addition to the frontality of her figure— a representational method whose uses in Egyptian art are limited and specialised (see Volokhine 2000)— is her prominence within the group. In fact, she is not only prominent, but dominant. She is the focal point of the stela, the viewer's eye being drawn to her by her central position and the orientation of the two gods facing inwards on either side. While the figure of Qadesh on the Ramose example is smaller than Min and Reshep, the lion on which she stands elevates her to a higher level, and in some other examples (e.g. BM EA 191 cited above) she is rendered on a much larger scale than the two gods. The arrangement of the figures creates the visual impression of a group in which Qadesh is the primary figure, with Min and Reshep appearing almost to be her entourage or attendants. This stands in stark contrast to the position of goddesses in most multi-gender groups, whether in tomb or temple decoration. Indeed, one might wonder whether the unusual arrangement of the group— as a multidimensional tableau rather than a unit of sequential figures— may intentionally foreground and maintain Qadesh's status, keeping her removed from the usual mechanisms of group representation that would likely place her in a secondary position.

It is possible that Qadesh's position outside of the usual gender dynamics of group settings derives from her origins outside of Egypt. If a goddess and her associations developed in one cultural context, and she was later introduced into another, then the underlying systems and frameworks of the new context may not be so inherent to her persona or her representation. However, in making such suppositions one must be cautious of being too essentialist, particularly since Qadesh appears to be the product of a complex network of cultural exchanges and interactions. Volokhine notes that the goddess'

appearance draws upon Hathoric iconography that had permeated into the Near East, which subsequently made her suitable for incorporation into the Egyptian pantheon and visual media (Volokhine 2000, 68). Furthermore, her appearance in Egypt was a result of the entangled interactions of imperialism, since (according to Cornelius) she was brought to the Nile Valley by the Egyptians who participated in Near Eastern military campaigns and colonial administration, as well as by slaves, prisoners of war, and immigrants from those areas (Cornelius 2004, 86–7). The understanding of Qadesh’s exceptionalism cannot be so simple as “she’s foreign”, since cultures are not inert monoliths; ideas, motifs, and practices move between them constantly, re-formed or re-articulated by the culture that adopts them. The process is not one of transplant, but of translation.

Nevertheless, while Qadesh might be considered just as Egyptian as any other deity by virtue of her absorption into Egyptian cultural systems, her foreign origins remain a probable factor in her ability to exist outside of patterns that are otherwise so pervasive. She may have classically Egyptian iconography, but she assumed this form while in her West Semitic context, and as has been ascertained, motifs that move into other cultural milieu often assume meanings and uses that fit their new setting. Qadesh’s Hathoric appearance might have made her particularly suitable for adoption by an Egyptian audience, but she was nevertheless a West Semitic goddess in form and function at the moment of transferral. Therefore, when Qadesh is incorporated into an Egyptian context, she is ‘translated’ through the lens of local cultural frameworks, but those frameworks may not affix so strongly to her as to goddesses who were formed in and by that context. The result is a newly formed Egyptian goddess who, through her apparent exemption from the usual gender dynamics of divine groups, is distinct from almost all others; a deity ‘of whom there is no equal’.

### 5.4.3. A Goddess Translated: Secondary Status and Egyptian Representational Vocabulary

However, the ‘translation’ of Qadesh might also reveal the true extent of goddesses’ structural secondariness in group contexts. She is the central, primary figure of the triadic stelae, yet aspects of her representation in some examples may contain echoes of supportive functions, suggesting that the secondary status of goddesses in multi-gender groups was otherwise so widespread that those dynamics formed part of the visual lexicon through which images of female deities were articulated.

Looking to the Ramose example, Qadesh holds her lotus flowers to the nose of Min, whilst holding the snake towards the face of Reshep (see Fig. 66). The same arrangement is visible on at least four of the other examples presented in Cornelius’ catalogue (5.1, 5.4, 5.6, 5.10). Cornelius argues that Qadesh’s snakes and flowers are her own attributes, and do not necessarily pertain to the gods that accompany her, an interpretation made probable by stelae that depict Qadesh without Min and Reshep yet still holding flowers and snakes (Cornelius 2004, 49, 127–9, Cat 5.14–6). However, the placement of these attributes on the Ramose example and others appears to be purposeful, and might utilise resonances between the objects and the gods to whose faces they are held. The lotus is associated with rejuvenation and sensuality (Hartwig 2004, 64, 99). Qadesh’s flowers might therefore resonate with Min’s associations with fertility and virility (Gabolde 2018, 514), whilst also signifying the regeneration and healing that likely formed part of the stela’s function. Meanwhile, the snake that Qadesh presents to Reshep may evoke his association with the desert margins, yet also his role as a guardian against the poisons inflicted by the animals of those areas, as indicated by his listing in the magico-medical text of P. Chester Beatty VII (BM EA 10687.3: Gardiner 1935, I, 64; II, pl. 36). Here too, Qadesh’s attributes benefit the probable function of the stela— protection

from, or treatment of, injury and disease— whilst also resonating with the persona and associations of her accompanying god.

Min and Reshep are therefore depicted as the recipients of iconographic paraphernalia provided by Qadesh, items whose associations interweave with their own and enhance the gods' presence within the scene. However, they do not interact with Qadesh in an analogous way, standing statically alongside her. The enhancement of presence is not a mutual process within the group; it moves outwards from the central goddess to the gods on either side. Her depicted actions towards Min and Reshep might therefore be read as supportive, even if to a small degree, and thus to contain an echo of the dynamics observable in most multi-gender groups.

The rendering of Qadesh's group on the Ramose stela, and others like it, demonstrates the pervasive and perhaps intrinsic nature of the secondary status of goddess figures in group settings. Elements of it are detectable even in this exceptional context, suggesting that a structural secondariness for female deities within multi-gender groups was so fundamental as to be part of Egyptian representational vocabulary; it is inherent in the visual language through which goddesses are 'described'. Through the act of translating Qadesh into the Egyptian representational system, markers of secondary status may have become infused into some of her depictions. Perhaps, for the artists who created these images, such dynamics were simply part of how one depicted a goddess within a group setting. Therefore, though Qadesh remains exceptionally dominant within her group, the way she is rendered in some of her triadic stelae— such as on Museo Egizio 50066— indicates the fundamental position held by hierarchical gender relationships within Egyptian representational vocabularies. These structures appear to have left little room for the exercising of goddesses' agency, unlike the pairing roles discussed in the previous chapter. Thus, while groups are observable at varying rates within tomb decoration, where

their microcosmic potential (see §5.2.2) perhaps proves a useful tool for achieving rebirth, multi-gender group contexts are largely absent from the presented temple case studies dedicated to female deities. Unlike Qadesh, these goddesses were formed within and through cultural frameworks in which the structures of secondariness identified in this thesis were inherent. They might therefore have been less able to operate outside of these frameworks as Qadesh was. In such circumstances, the best way to exert or retain agency within groups is, perhaps, to avoid them.

## 6. Conclusion

### 6.1. Reviewing the Question

The dedicatory pages of this thesis evoked a quote by feminist author Gloria Steinem: ‘God may be in the details, but the goddess is in the questions’. In many ways, this is an ethos that has shaped the course of the presented research, albeit through ‘questions’ framed in somewhat more specific terms. It is not simply goddesses themselves, but their gendered agency— as represented and constructed through two-dimensional compositions of the Ramessid period— which has been interrogated here.

Chapter 1 outlined the decision to use scenes from tomb and temple environments as the primary data sets, with the votive stelae of Ramose providing supplementary material. In order to observe the agencies of the depicted goddess figures, a typology of the roles fulfilled by goddesses in two-dimensional compositions was formulated and then applied to these scenes. The resultant observations were then collated, and descriptive statistics used to observe patterns within individual monuments and wider data sets. These statistical methods provided a general topography of processes and patterns within the material in which case studies could be contextualised, with the case studies in turn elucidating those processes and trends. The discussion was then structured and presented according to both the roles of the typology used to investigate goddesses’ gendered agency, and the contexts of the images themselves.

Chapter 2 discussed individual agents and recipients in tomb contexts, while Chapter 3 examined this same role in temple settings. This division was made in view of the different patterns of attestation and function for individual agents in those spaces, resulting from a distinction in the core ritual functions of those environments. Chapter 2

showed that the role of individual agent is often one of the most-attested categories of goddess figure within a tomb's decorative programme. Nonetheless, these figures are often placed in less prestigious areas of a wall or column if that surface is shared with scenes depicting gods. The individual agents of tomb decoration are primarily drawn from a group of goddesses who can be associated with narratives of rebirth, rejuvenation, or the process of justification before the divine tribunal. There are, however, instances of individual agents from outside of this pool, one of which was presented as a case study: the Pillar H figure of TT 106. Here, the figure participated in a group of interrelated uraeus deities, several of whom were evoked simultaneously through the figure's iconography and identifications as a vehicle of self-presentation. The Pillar H example demonstrates that goddesses, even those depicted alone, can exhibit fluidity and multiplicity in their representations.

A second case study opened an important dialogue, one that would resurface throughout the discussions of the thesis, namely the existence of goddess-specific forms of agency. The example in question was an image of Nut on the ceiling of the short entrance passage into the burial chamber of TT 1. The scene appears to utilise solar imagery, as well as Nut's longstanding association with the ceilings of burial complexes, in order to facilitate the deceased's movement in and out of the tomb through the bodily metaphor of birth. Depictions in similar positions in other decorated burial complexes at Deir el-Medina— in TT 267, TT 290, and TT 335— may fulfil similar functions. In TT 1, as well as in these possible contemporaries, the goddess' image functions in the tomb programme in a manner that is tied to concepts of her female nature, by means of the biological processes that featured in Egyptian formulations of gender categories, and therefore appears to be a distinctly somatic mode of agency that is particular to goddesses.

Chapter 3 focused on individual agency in two environments from the temple data set; the second hypostyle hall in the temple of Seti I at Abydos, and the Small Temple at Abu Simbel. The first case study showed that the decoration of the second hypostyle hall is, in fact, comprised of seven decorative units, each associated with the resident deity of the chapel to which the unit is aligned. When examining the depiction of goddesses across those units, it was found that, while individual agents constitute an overwhelming majority of the hall's goddess figures, in most of the decorative units this individual agency was allotted a secondary status. Images of goddesses primarily function to demarcate the decorative units, whose resident deities determine which goddesses are depicted. The exceptions to the pattern occur in the decorative unit associated with the chapel of Isis, reflecting her status as the focal figure in the representational narrative of that area. The discussion of the second hypostyle hall was the beginning of the study's main engagement with the issue of secondary status. Furthermore, it introduced the possibility that such a position within hierarchies of agency might allow goddesses to act in ways that gods cannot, notably in the form of two goddesses who occupy positions on the east wall that are normally reserved for images of the chapel occupants.

The second case study in Chapter 3 noted the emerging tension between the prominence of goddesses' agency and their position in wider hierarchies of status. It therefore observed whether those same processes might be in operation within a monument entirely given over to a goddess. Descriptive statistics were once again applied, showing that most goddess figures were depicted as individual agents, as in Abydos' second hypostyle hall. Nonetheless, it was demonstrated through the placement of scenes that other processes were likely at work. We explored how the Small Temple, which is dedicated to Hathor, accordingly depicts many goddesses, most of whom have individual agency. And yet, images of gods (and of the king) occur at some of the focal points in the

space. Mapping out these scenes revealed two experiential narratives that are held simultaneously within the decorative programme; a first, foregrounding gods and the king to the viewer who moves inwards through the temple from the outside, and the second, centring goddesses and the queen if moving outward from Hathor's residence in the sanctuary. As such, the Small Temple appears to materialise a negotiation between the context-specific requirements of female prominence, and wider norms of male primacy.

Chapter 4 turned the study's focus to the 'pairing roles'; the categories of the study's typology in which goddess figures formed pairs with other figures, namely kin and non-kin co-agents, counterparts, and supporters. It was proposed that pairing tends to express three broad kinds of relationship; those based on kinship, those evoking a thematic connection such as shared associations with certain places or narratives, and those that communicate a close intertwining of the figures' personas. As we have postulated, the possible nuances that the pairing roles might bring to such relationships are varied: co-agents appear to express more dynamic action and complementarity; counterparts preserve something of the figures' individual presence, while also tending to place goddesses in secondary positions in multi-gender pairings; and supporters are markedly secondary, through both their position in scenes and the focus of their agency being on the figure they support. Analyses of the attestations of these roles across the data sets allowed the recognition of patterns and variations therein, patterns that were interrogated and will be looked to again in the coming review of the study's use of quantitative methods.

The chapter's case studies explored the three relationships expressed by pairing, using them not only as illustrative examples, but also as lenses for further observing the relationship between goddesses' gendered agency and their position within hierarchies of status. Some of these contexts are perhaps the clearest examples of goddesses being depicted in secondary positions to gods. As such, they provide an opportunity to consider

how divine female agency might function within and through those positions. The first case study, examining examples of kin-based pairing in the chapel of Isis at Abydos, demonstrated the pervasiveness of goddesses' secondary status, as in one of the two kin-based pairings in Isis' chapel she is shown as a supporter to Osiris. She is secondary within her own cultic space. However, as we shall shortly explore in reflecting upon goddesses' secondary status, Isis' adoption of this position allows her to express an important aspect of her persona.

The second case study examined a motif in which Maat appears as a counterpart or supporter to Ptah, through an occurrence of the pairing on one of Ramose's votive stelae. It was found that this pairing occurs only in the tombs of Ramessid royal women—predominantly queens yet also in the 'queenly' sections of Tawosret's tomb in the Valley of the Kings— as well as in the private monuments of people associated with the tomb builders' community at Deir el-Medina. Ptah is attested as being a patron god of the Valley of the Queens, and Maat's name is resonant with the toponym *st-M3't* that designates the landscape and institution of the restricted necropolis in which the Valley was set. Therefore, the motif's likely function in queens' tombs is to embed the monument in the landscape, an icon of emplacement that seems to have been adopted by the artists themselves and used as an expression of belonging within the artisans' community. The goddess figure who appears in this motif occupies a markedly secondary position, yet she is crucial for the construction and communication of its meaning. The nature of hierarchy, and of goddesses' status within it, has thereby been shown to be more nuanced than a binary distinction between the primary figures who have agency, and the secondary figures who do not.

The third and final case study of Chapter 4 provided an example of identity pairing, and also of a mode of representation that is largely restricted to goddesses. In the north half

of the burial chamber of TT 335, Taweret and Anuket are depicted as a pair of counterparts, their figures partially superimposed. It was shown that a spatial relationship exists between other scenes in the north half of the chamber and a band of text, which contains an offering formula that runs above the scenes; the identity of the deity who appears in one of these scenes matches the divine name that is listed in the offering formula above. The images of Anuket and Taweret appear beneath the name and epithets of Hathor. It was demonstrated that both goddesses have Hathoric associations, and therefore argued that TT 335 presents Taweret and Anuket as forms of Hathor through strategies of spatial organisation. The close interrelationship of the two deities through Hathor is yet another instance of the multiplicity and fluidity that appears to be a characteristic potentiality of goddesses' representations. The TT 335 scene is also an example of a mode of representation— in which pairs of figures are closely overlapped or even superimposed— that is very rarely seen among gods, and seemingly never among those with developed personas and mythologies. It is a compositional technique that is largely the reserve of goddesses, one that, as we shall see, is enabled by their secondary status within representational hierarchies.

Chapter 5, the last chapter of primary analysis, examined the depiction of goddesses in group contexts. It might be assumed that those settings where goddesses carry out the same actions as gods, receive worship together with gods, or are otherwise rendered in a similar manner, would feature egalitarian arrangements where agency is distributed equally. In actuality, they are anything but. Multi-gender groups often encode unequal dynamics through such elements as the ordering of figures, lower numbers of goddesses compared to gods, and the placement of goddesses in less prestigious areas of compositions. In tomb contexts, some groups of more generic divine figures appear to represent the divine multitude in a broader sense, such as the deities depicted in a shrine on

the west wall of TT 1's burial chamber who are designated as 'all the gods of the *Duat*'. The hierarchical structuring of such groups materialises an androcentric impression of the social landscape of the divine world, dynamics that in all likelihood underly the apparent avoidance of group contexts in the temple environments that feature goddesses as central figures. Even among the triadic stelae of Qadesh, in which a goddess is exceptionally prominent within a multi-gender group, some features preserve echoes of secondary or supporting status; she stands front and centre of Ramose's stela as the goddess 'of whom there is no equal', and yet she is shown offering her divine paraphernalia to Min and Reshep on either side of her. The structural secondariness of goddesses is so pervasive that it forms part of Egyptian representational vocabulary.

If the goddess is in the question, her complexity is in the answer. The representation of goddesses' gendered agency largely communicates the secondary position of that agency in frameworks of prominence and status, even in those where such agency is individual or enacted. Goddesses are depicted as secondary to gods in most contexts. Where they do take on a primary position they tend to do so in bounded areas of monuments from which gods might be largely excluded, or else a series of negotiations might take place within a composition or decorative programme to accommodate female prominence while preserving male primacy. The impression given at the beginning of the thesis by *the Onomasticon of Amenemope*, in which gods come first and goddesses come second, seems to be broadly accurate. However, the study has revealed something that was not expressed by the *Onomasticon*, and which is an insight gained from our focus of the research on visual representation; not only are goddesses still able to exert agency within these structures, but they have developed modes of agency and representation that are unavailable to gods, precisely *because* of their secondary status. With this in mind, we now

turn to the quantitative methodologies that helped to identify these unique forms of agency, before considering their specific natures.

## 6.2. Topographies of Agency: Quantitative Methods in the Study of Gendered Representation

In designing the research strategies for this study, inspiration was drawn from the work of Deborah Sweeney in order to use quantitative methods to ground, contextualise, and draw out observations from the data sets, in a manner that would both benefit and bolster relational analyses of gendered representation. Through the application of the proposed typology of goddesses' roles to the decorative programmes of tombs and temples, and the subsequent use of statistical description to characterise those decorative programmes, several patterns and processes have been observed. Some of these findings are presented below, along with an appraisal of the utility of such methods for the study of gendered representation.

At the most fundamental level, using percentages to describe the proportions of a monument's goddess figures claimed by the different roles of the typology allowed the general distribution of roles in that monument to be observed. When collated together, especially in the case of the corpus of private tombs, these values created topographies of goddesses' agency within data sets. These maps—much like the associations within the Pillar H compositions discussed in Chapter 2—are layered, each stratum being a set of attestations from a single monument. The layers accumulate to produce a single picture of the distribution of roles which, though composite, allows us to view patterns and concentrations that echo in the individual monuments that make up the samples. The case studies presented in the thesis can be contextualised and situated within these topographies of agency.

Yet these quantitative methods do not simply produce contextualising patterns with which to frame analysis. They can inform, and even lead that analysis. In the temple case studies, the observation of the high proportion of individual agents in the Small Temple and at Abydos on the one hand, and the predominance of counterparts at Karnak on the other, pointed towards the central role of cultic focus in forming the agency of goddess figures in temple spaces; goddesses have high levels of individual agency in spaces entirely or partially dedicated to them, while in the temple of a god, their depictions are primarily anchored to him.

Such data-led analysis took on a central role when comparing the data sets of Theban and Memphite private tombs. It was noted that there are points of alignment and divergence in the topographies of agency in those regions. Both data sets featured individual agents as one of their most consistently attested categories, yet Theban and Memphite tombs appear to differ most strongly in how they depict goddesses in the context of pairing. Theban tombs display a diverse range of pairing roles— a notable feature of Theban pairing is the use of co-agency, particularly in representing the sister goddesses Isis and Nephthys— but on average they show a tendency towards depicting goddesses as supporters. Meanwhile, Memphite tomb programmes prefer the role of counterpart as a means of pairing, and the use of co-agency is completely absent from the Memphite sample. Statistical treatments of the roles of goddesses therefore suggest that conventions surrounding the depiction of goddesses within pairs were an aspect of regional artistic traditions.

The use of quantitative methods has proven useful in this study's appraisals of gendered agency and how it is represented. However, like all tools, these methods should be used in knowledge of their limitations as well as their potentials. An important issue is the question of representativeness. The fragmentary nature of the material record is a

source of anxiety for any student of the past who attempts to observe the frameworks that underlie sociocultural phenomena, a concern that does not disappear when using that material in statistical analyses. There are indeed mechanisms within statistical methodologies that can go some way to addressing this issue, such as the observation of even or uneven distributions within the data points, as has been done in the presented analyses. One might also frame the surviving monumental record as a random sample of what once existed, although such a framing can only really be justified within data sets rather than between them; random sampling is most effective as a testing strategy with ‘all being equal’, and as can be seen from the distribution of surviving private tombs and temple environments across Egypt, all is not equal in the processes that form the material record. Furthermore, in using descriptive statistics to observe patterns and trends within the data sets, one must remember that the product is a collage, not a photograph. Just as producing a synoptic edition of a text from fragmentary manuscripts can reveal patterns and processes, yet might run the risk of creating an urtext that never itself existed, so too collating multiple attestations of goddesses’ roles might create the impression of an ‘ideal’ monument, which at different times might be similar to or different from what is observable in the individual monuments of the data set.

Such limitations are likely an inherent feature of these forms of analysis, yet they can be accommodated for in how one relates the trends to the specifics, and how conclusions are drawn from them. What makes Sweeney’s work on gendered conversational behaviour so effective is the balance she strikes between general patterns and the raw numbers of her tally of verb forms, and the individual contexts that those numbers represent. The *Horus and Seth* scribe is unlikely to have been counting verb forms as he wrote, thus it is advisable to observe the overall shape of how male and female speech is formed in the text, yet the outliers of this pattern— such as Neith, who uses

imperatives in a way mostly associated with the male characters of the tale— as well as the contexts of examples that do fit the pattern are both important for understanding the processes at work. Similarly, this study has sought to use statistical methods in order to observe broader patterns, has used those trends to contextualise specific examples and case studies, yet also used unusual case studies to problematise or better understand the processes within those trends. While quantitative methodologies are not universally applicable to every research endeavour, for this study, which has examined deeply relational social phenomena through an equally relational representational system, they have proven valuable.

### 6.3. Carving out a Space: The Unique Agencies of Secondary Status

Questions of hierarchy and status quickly emerged as a central theme of this research. The study's focus, and the need for work of this kind, was introduced at the beginning of the thesis with the opening lines of *the Onomasticon of Amenemope*, a source that not only outlines a gender distinction in the divine sphere but suggests an implicit hierarchy incorporating that distinction. As noted in the chapter review above, the presented case studies and statistical analyses largely support the impression created by the *Onomasticon*. However, they also nuance and complicate it, through the unique functions and modes of representation that goddesses can exhibit within their secondary position. Indeed, within the context of an androcentric representational system, their status is probably the source of these qualities.

It has already been noted that goddesses can exercise forms of agency even where they are clearly ascribed a secondary position. In the pairing motif of Maat and Ptah, the goddess occupies a secondary position to the god: most of the Deir el-Medina examples depict her as a supporter. She is nonetheless an important iconographic element in

generating the meaning of that motif. In fact, her placement behind Ptah may be pivotal in that process, as this ordering of the figures (and thus of the locations they embody) situates the Valley of the Queens (Ptah) within the wider context of the 'Place of Truth' (Maat). Hierarchies of status and agency therefore appear more complex than a simplistic distinction between those who act and those who are inert, and goddesses who occupy secondary positions can serve important functions within representational strategies.

Furthermore, the secondary status of goddesses can be more than just a situation to be existed within, or otherwise made the best of. It can be an opportunity. Returning to the second hypostyle hall in the temple of Seti I at Abydos, the broadly secondary position of most goddesses in the space is what qualifies Mut and Sekhmet to be depicted on the east wall, an area of the decorative programme that only otherwise depicts the resident deities of the temple's seven chapels. The goddesses fall within the decorative area associated with Seti's chapel, occupying positions that should therefore be held by figures of Seti himself, yet the decorative scheme of the east wall demands that each scene features a singular deity and the king engaged in a ritual interaction. In order to maintain the pattern of the rest of the wall, the figures in this position must be depicted as individual agents, but cannot be high status enough to completely draw focus from Seti. Furthermore, an apparent strategy of the area is to emphasise Seti's position as a chapel resident (even though he occupies the usual king's position) by rendering his image in a similar manner to the resident deities elsewhere on the wall, and by assigning the placeholder deities epithets that connect them to Ptah in the neighbouring decorative unit. The strategy introduces the potential for conflicts of status, as the placeholder deities must be associable with Ptah yet not threaten his dominance in his own decorative area. In short, the stand-ins must be prominent without having primacy. This is a role that only a goddess can fulfil.

The possibilities of secondary status can be seen elsewhere at Abydos, where Isis is depicted as a supporter in her own chapel. If the very fact that Isis is able to occupy such a role within her own cultic space is demonstrative of the pervasive nature of goddesses' secondary status, it might also be regarded as the seizing of a representational opportunity, when considered in the context of pairing as an iconographic strategy in the Abydos chapels. In the shrines of Isis, Horus, Ra-Horakhty, and Ptah, the west end of the south wall is an area where the resident deity is shown in a kin-based pairing, as a means of expressing the resident's extended persona; the dimension of a deity's being that is characterised by relationality. The other chapels have a single pairing on this register, but Isis' has two. In one she is supported by her son Horus, taking the usual position of a resident deity, while the other is the pairing in which she acts as a supporter to Osiris. The addition of a second kin pairing, in which she is shown supportively alongside her consort with whom her mythology is so closely intertwined, allows a core aspect of Isis' persona to be expressed. The pervasiveness of goddesses' secondary position in multi-gender pairings, and in wider hierarchies of prominence, facilitates a moment in the decorative narrative that is unlikely to occur in the chapel of a god.

Further to such iconographic functions, goddesses' status in the formulation of representational norms has resulted in a method of depicting their figures that is largely unavailable to their male contemporaries, namely in the form of closely overlapping or superimposed pairs of figures. The phenomenon is extremely rare among pairs of gods, and the very few identifiable examples are between gods without distinct individual personas, iconographies, or mythological presence. Meanwhile, the close pairing of goddess figures is frequently seen among even major goddesses, across a range of media and contexts. Furthermore, it can be used to communicate a range of relationships and dynamics: in TT 335, the overlapping of Taweret and Anuket might be understood as part

of the close intertwining of their identities that appears to take place in that composition; in various versions of the weighing of the heart vignette, the superimposition of Isis and Nephthys as they stand behind Osiris might communicate their almost unitary status in the Osirian narrative, the sisters who resurrected their brother and overcame death; where Meskhenet and Renenet are closely paired in some of those same judgement scenes, their spatial relationship might materialise their close thematic interconnection through associations with birth. Therefore, while the overlapping or superimposition of pairs of goddess figures might seem like a simple space saving measure, it can in fact be used as a highly meaningful method of representation.

The apparent inability of gods to be depicted in this way is likely due to their position as male beings within a representational system that is both hierarchical and androcentric. It may seem contradictory to assert that such a position might be limiting, but membership of a core group— to remain aligned with the presumed qualities of a social agent within cultural structures— often entails adherence to the norms of the centre. Egyptian representational conventions are formulated with the primacy of gods as a base premise, which results in an aversion to anything that might inappropriately subordinate or visually diminish a god's presence. This includes having their image covered over by another figure if they themselves have a known persona. Such high rates of compositional conservatism prevent most gods from participating in forms of representation such as the close pairing of figures.

Goddesses, however, are inherently peripheral in such formulations. While this entails a secondary status in hierarchies of agency, in certain contexts it can also allow greater flexibility and opportunity in their representation; where there is less concern with primacy, there are lower levels of compositional conservatism. The gendered agency expressed in depictions of goddesses is therefore complex, processual, even paradoxical. It

is both bounded and less restricted. It is secondary, yet allows goddesses to go to places gods cannot go, do things that gods cannot do. In the forms of representation it inspires, it can diminish goddesses' presence within compositions, yet can also make them fluid and multiple, an expanse of personas and associations present through sometimes a single figure. The representation of goddesses' gendered agency demonstrates the complexities of hierarchy, and the ability of those who are allotted secondary status— even those beyond the human realm— to carve out a space within unequal structures. *The Onomasticon of Amenemope* may have been correct to present goddesses as broadly secondary to gods, yet those same goddesses have shown us that there is possibility in the periphery.

#### 6.4. Future Avenues

This project has gone some way toward addressing the gap in scholarship that engendered it, though does not pretend to have closed that gap entirely. The presented thesis has examined the gendered agency of goddesses in two-dimensional representations of the Ramessid period; while the insights gained from the enquiry have been fruitful, and the Egyptological conversations around gender have been expanded into the divine realm, the focus of a single thesis does not incorporate every possible avenue of enquiry, nor can it utilise every methodology or source material that might prove useful for those discussions. In the introductory chapter, the hope was stated that this thesis might be the beginning of wider conversations, and that it might contribute new approaches to the toolbox of the discipline. What follows are thoughts and suggestions of what some of those conversations might be, and how these approaches might be further used and developed.

Egyptian constructs of gender appear to operate through an essentialist gender binary. This study has turned the theoretical lens towards the divine sphere, yet in doing so has focused on just one half of that binary. Future work might take the models and

approaches that have been developed here and apply them to gods. The project's analyses and conclusions have included gods, since culturally defined gender categories are mutually constituted. One cannot study one gender group without some contact with others, since gender is a relational system of sociality. The gendered roles and representations of gods might nonetheless be subjected to analysis of their own, a useful focus of which would be whether there are features of gods' gendered agency that are particular to their male nature, or whether in the Egyptian system constructs of godhood and divinity were effectively synonymous.

An avenue that might pursue the theorisation of gods whilst further developing the work of this thesis would be a more in-depth study of identity pairings between goddesses and gods, particularly where a solar god is depicted with a Hand or Eye goddess. If she is understood to be an emanation of the sun god, or a personification of one of his attributes, then how might her gender be conceptualised? Is there clean break between the two, or is some connection maintained, and if so is that connection reflected in the roles that either or both of them fulfil? The investigation of such questions might prove an interesting extension or even complication of the insights gained through this study.

The focus of the research presented here has been on visual media, due to the potential of those sources to encode and materialise gender dynamics, yet also because textual sources have long been privileged within some sectors of Egyptology as the principal (or sole) point of contact with the culture under study. Such an approach may hold true for some contexts, but not for all, and part of the aim of this study was to further develop the use of visual and material culture as a primary source of analysis. However, this does not mean that the approaches used in this thesis cannot complement textual studies or be used alongside them. Some of the project's findings might lend themselves well to an integrated study of visual and textual representation, for example the apparent

effect that Qadesh's foreign origins has on her ability to resist the usual gender dynamics of group contexts. An incident is called to mind from *Anat, Seth, and the Seed of Pre*, a mythic precedent to a magic spell whose most complete version is recorded in P. Chester Beatty VII (Gardiner 1935, pl. 36; van Dijk 1986). In the text, Seth has been struck ill by Pre, and Anat attempts to mediate on Seth's behalf, at which point Pre asks 'What is the matter with you, Anat, victorious goddess, who acts as a warrior, who wears a kilt like men and a sash(?) like women?' (vso 1.9–2.1). Here we see another West Semitic goddess who seems to exist outside of the norms of gender expression. An integrated analysis of the visual and textual representations of the gendered agency of foreign goddesses might prove highly fruitful.

Finally, the insights and approaches of this project, and of any that might follow it, could be incorporated into the wider study of gender as a sociocultural phenomenon. Valuable comparative work has already been done that brings the gendered representations and experiences of ancient Egypt into contact with those of other (mostly ancient) cultures, yet Egyptian material has not featured as centrally as it might in the theoretical discourses of anthropology, sociology, and of gender studies as a discipline. Ancient Egyptian material has much to contribute to these areas; with the depth of material available to us, from a context so removed from the predominantly Euro-American backdrop of much of the theoretical canon, Egyptology has the potential to be an active participant in interdisciplinary conversations, and to benefit in turn from those conversations. It is through such connections that the study of gender, in ancient Egypt and beyond, might be furthered.

As Gloria Steinem reiterated in her speech to the Women's March in Washington D.C., 21<sup>st</sup> January 2017:

'God may be in the details, but the goddess is in connections.'

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