

**On the Endurance of Indigenous Religious Culture  
in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt:  
Evidence of Material Culture**

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For my Aunt  
who started it all.

## ABSTRACT

The aim of this thesis is to examine changes in the status of traditional Egyptian religious culture during the Ptolemaic and Roman periods, from 331 BCE to 313 CE. Four distinct categories of material culture are examined: monumental construction of temples and civic buildings, traditional hard-stone sculpture, Alexandrian tombs, and Roman coins. These bodies of evidence were chosen because each offers a unique perspective, reflecting respectively the personal inclinations and official attitudes of both the culturally Hellenic and indigenous elites, which have not previously been studied in this context. Examined together for the first time, these categories reveal commonalities that show clearly the progression of the status of indigenous religious culture. From this, it is argued that, despite being economically disadvantaged by the Roman administration, the high status of this culture persisted in Egyptian society under both the Ptolemies and the Romans.

Patterns of Egyptian temple and classical civic building show that Egypt's indigenous elite controlled the resources allocated for temple construction under the Ptolemies, but that the Romans gradually transferred this land into the management of the culturally Hellenic elite. This resulted in a decrease in Egyptian temple building after the first century CE and a corresponding increase in classical construction from then on. The production of hard-stone statues is shown for the first time to reveal that the indigenous elite had the resources and cultural confidence to continue and develop their traditions under the Ptolemies, while the sharp decrease at the start of the Roman period reflects their diminution in autonomy and prosperity under Roman rule.

New analysis of traditional elements and motifs in the tombs of Alexandrian elites shows that this group respected and adopted indigenous religious customs and beliefs, with a higher incidence of indigenous imagery in the Roman period compared with the Ptolemaic period. In a similar way, well-informed Egyptian religious iconography rendered in a classical style on Alexandrian coins demonstrates the respect of the Roman authorities for Egyptian religious cults and institutions at an official level.

In sum, it is argued that indigenous religious culture largely maintained its privileged economic and social status throughout the Ptolemaic period, despite political upheavals. Under Roman rule, the individuals and institutions representing Egyptian religious culture were disadvantaged economically; however, its social importance and standing were preserved and it continued to enjoy respect.



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## INTRODUCTION

### **Aims and Methods**

The religious culture of ancient Egypt impacted nearly every part of society for over 3,000 years, and has been the subject of scholarship for decades. However, important aspects of its final chapters are poorly understood. In this thesis I examine the changing status of traditional Egyptian religious culture during the Ptolemaic and Roman periods, from the foundation of Alexandria in 331 BCE, to 313 CE when the Edict of Milan officially recognising Christianity as a legitimate religion heralded the eclipse of pagan cults throughout the Roman Empire. Ultimately, I argue that, although economically disadvantaged by the Roman administration, and despite fluctuating levels of state engagement under different rulers, indigenous religious culture maintained high social status not only under the Ptolemies but also under the Romans until the widespread adoption of Christianity.

### ***Defining the Topic***

The aim of this work is to provide a broad outline of the fate of indigenous religious culture in Egypt at the elite level throughout this period. It is not possible to address all domains of religion in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt within the scope of a thesis, and the subject matter considered here largely excludes non-elite evidence from consideration. However, by considering the inclinations of a group whose preferences historically set a standard for much of society, it is possible to gain insights relatable to the wider population. Moreover, the dating of much relevant evidence is only approximate and does not allow the construction of a precise timeline for the changes that can be observed. Consequently, I have chosen to examine relevant aspects of four distinct bodies of evidence: monumental temple and civic construction, indigenous hard-stone sculpture, Alexandrian tombs, and Roman coins. Although there are other areas of material culture relevant to this research, these are not considered here due to the limits of length and time within which this thesis is placed. Each of the four listed above has

been selected as reflecting most clearly one of four primary perspectives: the personal inclinations and official attitudes of both the Hellenised and the indigenous elite, specifically in relation to the part these groups played in effecting change. When the bodies of evidence chosen here are examined side by side, commonalities of development are revealed that trace clearly the evolution of the status of indigenous religious culture over the period in question.

Instead of presenting an exhaustive analysis, I have attempted to present these chapters as case studies contributing to a provisional synthesis. Such a comparable range of studies has not been attempted before. David Frankfurter has addressed questions of religious assimilation at a more local level under the Romans,<sup>1</sup> and similar issues are raised in the Oxford Handbook of Roman Egypt edited by Christina Riggs, which is the most advanced recent source for this subject in general.<sup>2</sup> By addressing the Ptolemaic as well as the Roman periods, and concentrating on the central institutions that dominated them, this thesis hopes to throw new light on the overall configuration of indigenous religious culture in Egyptian society during both of these periods, as well as on the groups, within both the indigenous and immigrant populations, who engaged with this culture.

To conduct as extensive an analysis as possible, I focus on elite indigenous individuals and religious institutions on the one hand, and the culturally foreign dominant group on the other, including the Ptolemaic kings and queens, the Roman emperors and their prefects, and the wealthy upper class of Egypt's Hellenistic and Roman cities. I consider equally the public and private attitudes of these two groups by concentrating on the economic and social contexts of their activity in different areas. As collectively funded elements intended for a wide audience, Roman coins and monumental temple and civic building reveal public choices and actions taken by the Hellenised ruling group and the indigenous elite. Conversely, indigenous portrait sculpture and Alexandrian tombs represent personal investments made collectively or individually by members of these

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<sup>1</sup> Frankfurter 1998, 15-22, 143-44.

<sup>2</sup> See e.g. Frankfurter 2012, 319-22; Stadler 2012, 389-92.

elite groups. Examination of these different bodies of evidence allows the status of indigenous religious culture to be reconstructed more accurately than by concentrating entirely on public expressions alone or on private choices of less communal consequence.

Scholars of Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt have often approached questions relating to these periods as either classicists or Egyptologists, interpreting the evidence through the lens of one discipline or the other while giving less attention to the perspective of the alternative side. By contrast, I aim to gather evidence from both classical and indigenous society in Egypt and weigh its implications equally within these traditions while also considering the interplay between the two. It is within this interchange at the uppermost levels of Egyptian society that vital answers to the questions addressed in this thesis can be found.

Prioritising the evidence of material culture over that of texts enables me to consider these perspectives from a wide and diverse range of sources. I employ textual sources where they clarify the implications of the primary evidence; for example in the first chapter, I consider many vanished structures now known only from ancient papyri, yet I focus primarily on the significance of the buildings themselves.

The status of indigenous religious culture is examined in two distinct manifestations: the culture's social status and the economic prosperity of its representatives. By distinguishing between these two aspects, I hope to engage with the complexity of the questions addressed here and answer them more thoroughly. The sources of evidence that I consider relate to both economic and social realities, often simultaneously. Monumental temple and civic construction and private hard-stone sculpture shed light on the social and economic circumstances of the indigenous priestly elite, while the evidence of Alexandrian funerary art and coin iconography indicates the social standing of indigenous religious culture in the eyes of the dominant Hellenised class.

### *Use of Terms*

I use the terms *traditional*, *Egyptian*, and *indigenous* interchangeably to refer to the society and culture, as well as elements deriving therefrom, that were carried over in a recognisable form from the pharaonic period into the Ptolemaic and Roman periods in Egypt. The term *Egyptianising* describes elements that are non-indigenous in origin but that attempt to reproduce an Egyptian aesthetic or set of ideas.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, *Egyptomania*, as used in this thesis, refers to a distinct movement, sometimes seen as a fashion trend or modish craze, that emerged throughout the Roman Empire at various times and can be seen, for example, in several second-century statues of Hadrian's favourite Antinous, who was depicted in Egyptian dress. This movement can be compared to the Western enthusiasm for Egyptian themes in the 19th century.<sup>4</sup> I use the term *classical* to refer to elements of Greek and Roman culture as imported from their respective regions, while *Hellenic* and *Hellenised* refer to any entity characterised predominantly by classical culture. As the *lingua franca* of Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt was Greek,<sup>5</sup> the terms *Hellenic* and *Hellenised* are used here to distinguish the culturally non-indigenous, privileged group that dominated the Egyptian society during this period from Egyptian-speaking indigenous culture, regardless of both the ethnicity of the individuals who comprised it and the evidently large presence of bilingualism in the general population.

It is not possible here to address the complex question of identity in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt. Centuries of immigration and intermarriage before and after the conquest of Alexander produced a diverse population of ethnic Greeks, Romans, persons of mixed Greek, Roman, and Egyptian ancestry, Hellenised Egyptians, and non-Hellenised Egyptians, not to mention the many other ethnicities present in Alexandria and other cities throughout Egypt.<sup>6</sup> While I address other distinguishing factors of identity in this thesis, my primary distinctions are based on language. The official

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<sup>3</sup> See Roulet 1972, 18-22.

<sup>4</sup> Roulet 1972, 19; Venit 2002a, 261-64.

<sup>5</sup> Benaissa 2012, 526-28.

<sup>6</sup> See Vandorpe 2012, 268-70.

tongues of the administration during the Ptolemaic and Roman periods were Greek and occasionally Latin,<sup>7</sup> whereas traditional temple texts continued to be inscribed in Egyptian hieroglyphs.<sup>8</sup> Legal documents and stelae intended for an indigenous readership also routinely used Demotic, a cursive form of Egyptian used since the 7th century BCE whose indigenous character remained largely unchanged despite the proximity of Greek and Latin.<sup>9</sup> From this essential linguistic difference therefore, I consider the ruling Hellenised elite separately from representatives of indigenous religious culture.

The Egyptian priestly elite is treated here fundamentally as a single class representing indigenous religious culture in both public and private spheres, and whose fortunes reflect the evolution of the culture's status. When the language of Egypt's administration switched to Greek in the late fourth century BCE at the beginning of the Hellenistic period,<sup>10</sup> the uppermost class of indigenous society became essentially marginalised from the display of administrative positions, at least in their guise of elite Egyptian-speakers. Consequently, this group does not form a distinct visible presence within Egypt's ruling class throughout the Ptolemaic and especially the Roman periods. Instead, the indigenous elite presented themselves primarily as holders of traditional priestly titles, a role in which their power as a group representing a community was recognised.<sup>11</sup> This group power can be seen strikingly in the Ptolemaic sacerdotal decrees issued jointly by a synod whose members are identified solely as Egyptian priests.<sup>12</sup> Thus, despite the large amount of cultural exchange during this time and the attendant complexities of questions of ethnic identity, the indigenous elite can be equated largely with the priestly class associated with the traditional temples, technically separate from the privileged Hellenised demographic and central state. These principal entities remain more or less distinct from one another throughout the Ptolemaic and Roman periods.

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<sup>7</sup> See Depauw 2012, 494, 500-01; Benaissa 2012, 527-28; Evans 2012, 518-19.

<sup>8</sup> Houston, Baines, and Cooper 2003, 440-43; Baines 2004, 39-41; Klotz 2012a, 563.

<sup>9</sup> Ray 1994, 255; Baines 2004, 40; Depauw 2012, 493.

<sup>10</sup> See e.g. Depauw 2012, 494.

<sup>11</sup> Baines 2004, 33-61.

<sup>12</sup> See Manning 2012, 97-101.

The intricacies of the priestly system, involving individual priests, links between different priesthoods, and the nature of their association with the temples, are not of primary importance for this argument and will not be discussed at length. Nevertheless, the structure of the group should be mentioned. Egyptian priests were members of an exclusive class restricted by birth and ancestry (a fact demonstrated by the heredity requirements for indigenous priestly families enforced by the Romans in the first century CE<sup>13</sup>), unlike the personnel staffing the temples of Greek and Roman deities in Egypt, who were civic officials occupying public posts in Egyptian cities. One example of this, assumed to have been replicated in all of Egypt's Hellenic cities, is the case of the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus at Arsinoe, where it is recorded that the temple overseer was appointed by the governing body of Arsinoe, who watched over his work and hired other necessary employees, including extra help during festivals.<sup>14</sup> With foreign rulers in power, and a Hellenised upper class dominating the administration from the Hellenistic city of Alexandria, the highest identifiable social class remaining within the indigenous population consisted of the economically and intellectually elite persons who composed the Egyptian priesthoods. Although some members of this group also had roles in the Greek-speaking state administration, indigenous forms of self-representation focused on their traditional priestly roles. Thus, holders of priestly titles will be examined as representative members of the indigenous upper class.

The label of 'Egyptian priest' has a broad application, and persons claiming priestly titles in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt range from members of hereditary priestly families, to individuals simultaneously holding Egyptian sacred office and Hellenic administrative posts. Two of the most important institutions in Egyptian religion at this time were the priesthoods of Ptah at Memphis and Amun at Karnak, whose respective chief members were traditionally drawn from the preeminent priestly family connected to the temple.<sup>15</sup> At Memphis, this succession was so firmly established that it is possible to reconstruct the genealogy of the High Priests of Ptah for the entire Ptolemaic Dynasty.

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<sup>13</sup> Bowman 1996, 180; Alston 2002, 200; Legras 2004, 151.

<sup>14</sup> See BGU 2.362; Glare 1992, 550, 552.

<sup>15</sup> Maystre 1992, 3-34; Murnane, 1994, 187-96; Abd el-Gawad 2011, 1-14; Thompson 2012, 128-36.

The office was so distinguished that the High Priest Psherenptah III (90-41 BCE) was able to boast of personal interaction with the ruling Ptolemy XII Auletes.<sup>16</sup> Below the highest levels of cultic office, indigenous temples were staffed with many different classes of personnel, including such groups as lector priests, *pastophoroi* (“shrine-carrying” priests), and *pterephoroi* (“feather-carrying” priests).<sup>17</sup>

It is clear that during the Ptolemaic and Roman periods an individual could hold priestly office at the same time as an administrative role, raising questions as to whether in some cases a priesthood was an honorary title rather than representing a real function. A priest by this definition would have occupied a position very different either from that of a full-time temple attendant or still more from that of a high priest. Due to the intricacies of this topic, and to avoid confusing the issue with complex questions of identity, in this thesis I do not consider at length roles held in the state administration, other than in terms of context. I refer to individual members of the indigenous priestly body primarily as holders of priestly office, and consider them principally as representatives of the indigenous religious culture whose continued existence provided the titles they bore.

### **Outline of the Argument**

In the first half of the thesis, I outline the eventual decline of the economic status of Egyptian religious culture after a period of prosperity under the Ptolemies. I examine the evidence of monumental temple and civic construction and indigenous statuary as reflecting the social standing and economic circumstances of indigenous religious institutions and their representatives. These two groups of evidence show the continued preeminence of indigenous religious culture throughout the Ptolemaic period, followed by economic privation and the decline of religious institutions after the Roman conquest, particularly after the first century CE.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Quaegebeur 1980, 43-80; Reymond 1981, 42-55; BM stela EA 147.

<sup>17</sup> Sauneron 2000, 34-35; Manning 2003, 34-35.

<sup>18</sup> See Manning 2003, 161-62; Monson 2012, 209, 287.

### ***Chapter 1: Indigenous Temples and Classical Civic Buildings: Different Patterns of Monumental Construction***

In the first chapter I examine the different patterns of monumental construction in Egypt, looking at traditional temples in the first section and classical civic buildings in the second. I focus on the major temple complexes because, as economic and cultural powerhouses, these represent the most significant investments of time and resources, and reveal state and indigenous involvement most plainly. This is set in clearer context in the chapter itself.

The prevalence of traditional Egyptian monumental construction during the Ptolemaic period, little changed by upheavals within the royal house, is shown in the first section to reflect the influence that the wealthy and economically powerful indigenous priestly elite were capable of exercising over the building programme in the country as a whole, and to reveal that they had primary control over the resources allocated for that purpose. Thus, traditional Egyptian monumental construction indicates the prosperity and power of the indigenous cults during the Ptolemaic period. Conversely, despite limited revivals, the marked decrease in large-scale, Egyptian-style building activity after the first century CE reflects the impoverishment of indigenous religious institutions, corresponding with the diminution of priestly influence with the state and over the construction and decoration of sacred structures.

In the second section of this chapter, analysis of the marked increase in the construction of classical civic buildings during the Roman period demonstrates how the same factors that encouraged the classical architectural tradition contributed to the slowing and eventual eclipse of the Egyptian building programme. The evidence of the papyri, including documents charting increased spending on civic construction and showing the loss of temple property at the same time, demonstrates that land previously controlled by indigenous religious institutions and the priestly elite was gradually transferred by the Roman administration into the control of the Hellenised urban elite, resulting in a decrease in indigenous temple building and decline in priestly fortunes

from the first century CE, and a corresponding increase of classical urban construction from then on.

***Chapter 2: Indigenous Hard-Stone Statuary: The Development and Disappearance of a Traditional Art Form***

The second chapter reinforces the argument for the social and economic prominence of the indigenous religious elite under the Ptolemies on the basis of the production and further development of traditional hard-stone sculpture as an elite indigenous art form throughout this period. In contrast, the sharp fall in the production of these figures after the Roman conquest reveals a steep reduction in the prosperity of this group under Roman rule. Since the stone from which these statues were fashioned was costly and difficult to work, it is clear that this was an exclusive form primarily consumed by those with access to expensive resources and related expertise. The subjects and contexts of surviving non-royal examples demonstrate that most were commissioned by elite individuals holding priestly office. The production of these statues throughout the Ptolemaic period reveals that the indigenous priestly elite possessed both the resources and the cultural confidence to perpetuate their traditions during this time. The very sharp decline in their production at the start of the Roman period, occurring along with a drop in quality of workmanship, indicates that holders of indigenous priesthoods had lost the means with which to commission such statues, reflecting a diminution in prosperity of the indigenous cults in general.

***Chapter 3: Traditional Religious Motifs in Alexandrian Funerary Art: Private Expressions of Reverence***

In the second half of the thesis, Alexandrian funerary art and coin iconography are studied in order to analyse the continued high status of indigenous religious culture after the end of the Ptolemaic period from the perspective of the dominant Hellenised class, including both the state and private citizens. These two groups of evidence

demonstrate that despite its loss of economic resources, indigenous religion maintained a high cultural standing throughout the Roman period.

The inclusion of traditional sacred motifs and architectural elements in Alexandrian burials shows that the Hellenised elite of Egypt respected indigenous religious customs and beliefs throughout the Ptolemaic and Roman periods. The appearance of more or less authentic Egyptian imagery in the tombs of affluent individuals of primarily Hellenic and Roman cultural identity shows that Alexandrian society adopted Egyptian religious traditions at least in the mortuary sphere, in which Egyptian and classical religious traditions were revered more or less equally. While the Romans generally treated local religious traditions civilly elsewhere, elite urban individuals in Alexandria appear to have accorded indigenous cults precedence over classical ones at times, showing that the dominant class had accepted Egyptian traditions to a significant degree. The particularly high incidence of indigenous religious imagery in Roman period tombs demonstrates that the adoption of Egyptian mortuary beliefs, including the practice of mummification, among the Alexandrian elite may have been even more pervasive at that time than in the Ptolemaic period. As the primary representatives of indigenous religion and sacred traditions, Egyptian religious institutions and their associated culture clearly retained a prominent social standing after the Roman conquest.

#### ***Chapter 4: Traditional Iconography in Roman Coinage: Official Sanctioning of Indigenous Religious Imagery***

In the final chapter, the study of Egyptian coinage is shown to reflect the status of indigenous religious culture from the perspective of the ruling administration. Despite being rendered in classical style, the many syncretising and purely Egyptian coin types produced in Alexandria during the Roman period show that, while the administration may have disadvantaged indigenous religious institutions economically, it did not reject the culture they represented. The presence of Egyptian religious iconography, depicted reverently in an official format intended for public viewing, demonstrates that the Roman

authorities accorded great respect to Egyptian religious cults and institutions in an official context. Furthermore, the accuracy with which Alexandrian coins portray the complexities of local indigenous religion indicate that they were designed by Roman officials in communication with Egyptian religious authorities. Both these people and their religion were treated with respect by the administration, which made an effort to understand the latter and represent it accurately. Thus, Alexandrian coinage demonstrates that traditional religious culture retained a high standing under the Romans.

### **Introduction: Conclusion**

In sum, the material evidence of Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt considered here shows that, despite periods of national upheaval, traditional Egyptian religious culture largely maintained its privileged economic and social status throughout the Ptolemaic period. This continuity can be seen in temple building, the production of hard-stone sculpture, and the construction of tombs adorned with indigenous religious iconography in Alexandria. In the Roman period the individuals and institutions that represented Egyptian religious culture became progressively disadvantaged economically, as is seen in the loss of temple property, the decline in temple construction and increase of non-indigenous building activity, and the cessation of production of hard-stone sculpture. However, the evidence of Egyptian elements in coin iconography and in Alexandrian tombs show that the religion's cultural importance and social standing were preserved and that it continued to enjoy respect under Roman imperial rule.



## CHAPTER 1

### Indigenous Temples and Classical Civic Buildings: Different Patterns of Monumental Construction

#### 1.1. Introduction

I have set out to examine the status of indigenous religious culture in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt from material evidence. As the most physically conspicuous group in this genre, monumental buildings offer a large-scale perspective on the circumstances of the time. In this chapter, I examine their connection to the country's elite who managed them, together with their enormous cultural significance, strategic siting, and central economic role,<sup>1</sup> in order to establish the background of the question at hand. By outlining the evolving flow of Egypt's resources as reflected in the creation of these buildings, and considering the cultural implications of their development, as well as their multifaceted significance with regard to Egypt's economy and society, it is possible to create a picture of the changing circumstances of indigenous religious institutions and the associated culture.

The abundant ruins throughout the Nile Valley, combined with the evidence of the papyri, make it clear that the Ptolemaic and Roman periods in Egypt were characterised by massive expenditure on the construction of monumental buildings, both indigenous and classical in style. Although local factors have largely obliterated architectural remains in the Delta, which would have been an extremely important region, traditional Egyptian temples built in Upper Egypt during this period – including those of Hathor at Dendara, Horus at Edfu, and Isis at Philae – remain some of the most iconic and best-preserved structures in the country. Only a few ruins remain of Egypt's classical buildings; yet, the original proliferation of such structures is amply attested to in the historical texts, from the records in ancient papyri to the early reports of the Napoleonic Expedition (1799-1801). Despite their different states of preservation, these two groups

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<sup>1</sup> Discussed in detail below.

of buildings are linked inextricably to each other by the socio-economic circumstances of their construction. While this connection has been mentioned in previous scholarship, being first detected by Judith McKenzie,<sup>2</sup> it has not yet been thoroughly examined, and its implications for indigenous religious culture in particular remain unaddressed.

In this chapter the construction and decoration of indigenous temples and classical civic buildings in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt is examined, with a focus on how the projects were funded, the development of the buildings, and how these factors changed over time. It is first asserted that Egyptian temples of this period were constructed at the instigation of the indigenous priestly class, who received both sanctioning and primary funding from the ruling administration in the form of targeted grants and endowments. Secondly, the civic buildings of Egypt's Greek and Roman urban centres are addressed, including both newly founded, and older, Hellenised cities as distinct from primarily indigenous settlements (disregarding legal labels such as *poleis* and *metropoleis*).<sup>3</sup> It is argued that these buildings were mainly financed by the cities' public funds, which in turn were drawn primarily from the coffers of the new Hellenic elites who filled the cities' administrative posts.

From here, I consider what the patterns of monumental temple and civic construction throughout the country reveal about the status of indigenous religious culture under Ptolemaic and Roman rule. While the central state did not directly administer the construction of either of these building types, it clearly played a key part in the building of both Egyptian temples and classical civic buildings by diverting the flow of Egypt's wealth according to the varying preferences of the state. Specifically, the fall-off of traditional temple building under the Romans derived from the transferral of resources, however indirectly, from the control of the indigenous religious institutions and their priestly representatives into the control of the new urban elite, resulting in a sharp increase in the construction of classical civic buildings. I conclude, therefore, that the construction patterns of the two building categories reveal the prosperity of elite

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<sup>2</sup> McKenzie 2007, 170, 399 n. 96; Minas-Nerpel 2012, 377-78.

<sup>3</sup> See Alston and Alston 1997, 199-200; Bowman 2000, 179-87.

indigenous religious institutions under the Ptolemies, followed by economic deprivation under the Romans in favour of elite, Hellenised urban culture.

### ***Previous Research***

#### *Indigenous Temples*

The temples of the Ptolemaic and Roman periods have been the subject of a large number of academic studies. Many scholars who treat this period in general include a section on the sacred constructions of the period,<sup>4</sup> most notable works on Egyptian temples address Ptolemaic and Roman constructions extensively,<sup>5</sup> and many surviving structures have been the subject of detailed individual analysis.<sup>6</sup> Yet, much research in this area has focused on the theology and epigraphy of the buildings,<sup>7</sup> while the study of other elements has been comparatively neglected. In particular, very little work has been done on the temples from an art historical perspective.<sup>8</sup> These lacunae in scholarship are gradually being remedied, as in McKenzie's recent work outlining the previously unaddressed development of a new architectural style in Ptolemaic and Roman temples.<sup>9</sup> The question of how indigenous temples were financed in the Ptolemaic and Roman periods has also surfaced only briefly. The problem has been recognised and commented on by several scholars, including McKenzie, John Baines, Gunther Hölbl, Martina Minas-Nerpel, and Peter Van Minnen.<sup>10</sup> Christopher Eyre concentrates on the significance of local initiative in construction projects, while Christelle Fischer-Bovet argues that the army played an important role in their funding.<sup>11</sup> Penelope Glare specifically addresses the relationship between the indigenous temples and the Roman administration in her doctoral thesis, while considering the effects of Roman imperialism

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<sup>4</sup> E.g. Bowman 1996; Hölbl 2001; Manning 2012.

<sup>5</sup> E.g. Quirke 1997; Arnold 2003; Shafer and Arnold 1998.

<sup>6</sup> E.g. Preys 2002; Kurth 2004.

<sup>7</sup> E.g. Barguet 1980, 9-14; Cauville 1987; Chassinat 1984-1990; Kurth 1997, 152-58.

<sup>8</sup> Vassilika 1989; Baines 1997, 227.

<sup>9</sup> McKenzie 2007, 119-46.

<sup>10</sup> Baines 1997, 227-230; Van Minnen 1997, 445-46, n. 32; Hölbl 2001, 85-90; McKenzie 2007, 120-25, 170; Minas-Nerpel 2012, 370, 377.

<sup>11</sup> Fischer-Bovet 2007, 1-17; 2014, 329-34; Eyre 2010, 120-24.

and widespread municipalisation on the temples and their personnel.<sup>12</sup> However, what the fate of the temples can reveal about the status of indigenous religious culture throughout both the Ptolemaic and Roman periods has not been addressed prior to this thesis.

### *Classical Civic Buildings*

Although classical civic buildings have long been overshadowed by their well-preserved indigenous counterparts, in recent years they have attracted a fair amount of academic attention, especially by scholars who have examined these structures in archaeological, architectural, and historical contexts. These include Richard Alston, Donald Bailey, Alan Bowman, Dominic Rathbone, and McKenzie.<sup>13</sup> As expected for a field of research encompassing a wide geographical and chronological area, these studies range from specific examinations of certain sites and/or buildings in particular, such as the work of Bailey who primarily addresses individual civic structures at Hermopolis Magna, to broad treatments of the subject as a whole, such as the work of Bowman and McKenzie. Yet few have investigated extensively how the construction of these edifices was funded. This issue has been taken up in more detail by Bowman and Rathbone, Richard Duncan-Jones, and Adam Lukaszewicz who explore the administration of civic buildings, the relationship between municipalities and the central state, and the resultant nature of the classical building programmes. Van Minnen in particular pursues these issues into the early fourth century at Hermopolis.<sup>14</sup> From the basis of this previous research, I consider specifically what the circumstances of Ptolemaic and Roman civic construction reveal about the status of indigenous religious culture when the evidence is compared with contemporary indigenous building programmes.

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<sup>12</sup> Glare 1993, 107-40.

<sup>13</sup> Bailey 1990; 1991; Alston 1997; Alston and Alston 1997; Bowman and Rathbone 1992; Bowman 2000; Bagnall and Rathbone 2004; McKenzie 2007, 151-72.

<sup>14</sup> Duncan-Jones 1982; 1985; 1990; Lukaszewicz 1986; Bowman and Rathbone 1992; Van Minnen 1997, 265-70.

## 1.2. INDIGENOUS TEMPLES

### Overview of the Evidence

To obtain a picture of this genre's significance, it is necessary to outline the monumental building programmes of the periods in question (see Appendix 1, Fig. 1.1). Because many indigenous temples are still extant and retain their dedicatory inscriptions, it is possible to create a timeline of their construction and maintenance, although the evidence is very heavily skewed toward Upper Egypt and the western oases. This is due to the almost total destruction of monumental buildings in the Delta,<sup>15</sup> and the general lack of evidence for indigenous temple construction in the Eastern Desert. In keeping with conventional ways of discussing the temples, I describe their construction and decoration (often distinctly separate phases) in relation to the ruler in power at the time.

### *The Ptolemaic Period*

The indigenous building programme under the Ptolemies began during the reign of the dynasty's political ancestor, Alexander the Great (332-323 BCE),<sup>16</sup> continuing on from the work of the indigenous 30th Dynasty.<sup>17</sup> Widely portrayed as having liberated Egypt from its destructive Persian overlords (blamed by such writers as Herodotus for religious atrocities, including desecrating the tombs of the pharaohs<sup>18</sup>), Alexander is named in the inscriptions of several sacred structures in the indigenous tradition, including a barque shrine at the ancient religious hub at Luxor,<sup>19</sup> and a temple dedicated to Amun-Ra and Horus in the Bahariya Oasis<sup>20</sup> where he may have traveled after his acclamation at Siwa as the son of Amun.<sup>21</sup> Alexander has also been linked with a

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<sup>15</sup> Baines 1997, 228.

<sup>16</sup> All regnal dates taken from McKenzie 2007, xiv.

<sup>17</sup> See Arnold 1999, 93-136.

<sup>18</sup> See Herodotus 3.16, 29.

<sup>19</sup> *Description* vol. 3, pls 6-18; Borchardt 1896, 122-38; Brunner 1977; Barguet 1980a, 1103-07; Bell 1985, 251-94; Azim 1985, 19-34; Murnane 1986, 135-48; Aufrère, Golvin, and Goyon 1991, 127-41; Arnold 2003, 134-35.

<sup>20</sup> Fakhry 1938, 397-434; 1942, 1950; 1974; Hawass 2000; Arnold 2003, 26.

<sup>21</sup> Bosch-Puche 2013, 131-35, 138-41, 145-49, 152-54; Bosch-Puche, Fox, and Ladynin 2014.

remarkable painted chapel at Kom Madi in the Fayyum.<sup>22</sup> The names of Alexander's two immediate successors also appear on the buildings of this period. Temple structures at Karnak and Hermopolis Magna bear the cartouches of Philip III Arrhidaeus (323-316 BCE), and those of the short-lived Alexander IV (316-305 BCE) can be found both at the site of Speos Artemidos,<sup>23</sup> near Beni Hasan, and on the temple of Khnum on Elephantine Island.<sup>24</sup> However, the architectural legacy of these three rulers is far outdone by that of the Ptolemies themselves.

The Ptolemaic building programme began under the founder of the dynasty, Ptolemy I Soter I (306-282 BCE), to whom are attributed several significant structures including a temple of Soknebtunis at Tebtunis in the Fayyum, and a temple of Amun at Naukratis.<sup>25</sup> Although these constructions are not as grand as those of subsequent generations, the widespread presence of this king's name inscribed in many of the major Egyptian temples in which decoration was executed at the time indicates an impressive extent of building and decorative activity during his reign. The Ptolemaic construction programme gained momentum under his son, Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285-246 BCE).<sup>26</sup> This king, whom Hölbl describes as "the first great builder worthy of special mention among the Ptolemies",<sup>27</sup> is credited with the erection of much of the temple complex at Philae,<sup>28</sup> one of the most noteworthy and best-preserved of all Egyptian temples, where more of the decoration dates to the reign of Ptolemy II than to that of any other Ptolemaic ruler.<sup>29</sup> Significant additions to the temple at Karnak are likewise attributed to him, as

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<sup>22</sup> Bresciani 2003, 157-75.

<sup>23</sup> Goedicke 1984, 1138-39; Klemm 1988, 45-46; Bickel and Chappaz 1988, 9-24; Arnold 2003, 226.

<sup>24</sup> Ricke 1960; Grossmann 1980; Van Siclen 1990, 188-94; Jaritz 1980, 189-93; Laskowska-Kuztal 1996; Jenni 1998; Niederberger 1999; Arnold 2003, 81.

<sup>25</sup> Petrie 1886; Gardner 1988; Dinsmoor 1950, 125-26, 134; Coulson and Leonard 1981; De Meulenaere 1982, 360-61; Arnold 2003, 159; Rondot 2004.

<sup>26</sup> See Mahaffy 1899, 82; Hölbl 2001, 86.

<sup>27</sup> Hölbl 2001, 86.

<sup>28</sup> *Description* vol. 1, pls 1-29; Prisse d'Avignes 1878, pls 24-25, 27, 47, 58-60; Bénédict 1893; Borchardt 1903, 73-90; Lyons 1908; Winter 1972, 229-37; Macquitty 1976; Farag, Wahba, and Farid 1977, 315-24; 1978, 147-52; Sauneron and Stierlin 1978, 139-73; Giammarusti and Roccati 1980; Winter 1982, 1022-27; Haeny 1985, 197-233; Vassilika 1989; Arnold 2003, 174-76.

<sup>29</sup> Vassilika 1989, 127.

well as a monumental temple to Isis of Hebt at Behbeit el-Hager in the Delta.<sup>30</sup> During his own lifetime, Ptolemy II was lauded by the contemporary Hellenistic poet Theocritus as a builder of sanctuaries and the benefactor of the gods.<sup>31</sup>

The increase in monumental construction that marks the reign of Ptolemy II continued after the accession of his son, Ptolemy III Euergetes I (246-221 BCE). The cartouches of this third Ptolemy are found in a considerable number of buildings, including a temple of Isis at Aswan<sup>32</sup> and noteworthy additions to the nearby complex at Philae. It was also during this time that construction is recorded as beginning on the great temple of Horus at Edfu,<sup>33</sup> one of the finest structures built during the Ptolemaic period, and one of the best preserved temples in Egypt.<sup>34</sup> Work on this temple continued for approximately 170 years until its completion under Ptolemy XII (80-58, 55-51 BCE),<sup>35</sup> and it bears the names of most of the intervening Ptolemies; however, the glory of its inauguration was ascribed to Ptolemy III.

The reign of his successor, Ptolemy IV Philopator (221-205 BCE), was similarly noteworthy. Sacred structures bearing Ptolemy IV's name are found at Philae, Luxor, Memphis, and Deir-el-Medina, to name only a few, and construction work in the south in particular (as far as Dakka in Lower Nubia<sup>36</sup>) appears to have been far more widespread than in previous generations. The concurrence of this increased activity and the difficult political situation in Egypt is noteworthy.<sup>37</sup> Ptolemy IV's reign was marked by native revolts as well as civil and foreign wars, as recorded by Polybius (c. 200-118 BCE).<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Meeks-Favard 1991, 25-98.

<sup>31</sup> Theocritus 17.108-09, 124.

<sup>32</sup> Mariette 1872-1889, pl. 22; Bresciani 1978; Jaritz 1975, 237-57; Arnold 2003, 23.

<sup>33</sup> *Description* vol. 1, pls 48-65; Rochmonteix and Chassinat 1897-1934; Chassinat 1984-1990; Blackman and Fairman 1946, 75-91; Alliot 1949; Lacau 1952, 215-21; Fairman 1974; Barguet 1980b, 9-14; Cauville 1984a; Cauville and Devauchelle 1984a; Vernus 1986, 323-31; Cauville 1987; Aufrère, Golvin, and Goyon 1991, 247-55; Cauville 1984b; Arnold 2003, 78-79; 1999, 169-71, 200-02, 216-20.

<sup>34</sup> Hölbl 2001, 87.

<sup>35</sup> See "The Great Building Inscription of the Edfu Temple" in Kurth 2004, 45-67.

<sup>36</sup> Gau 1822 n. 55, pls 33-38; Roeder 1913, pls 1-10.

<sup>37</sup> Mahaffy 1895, 274; Hölbl 2001, 161; Baines 1997, 229.

<sup>38</sup> Polybius 14.12.

Nonetheless, construction of sacred buildings continued as before, even surpassing the activity of earlier, more peaceful years.<sup>39</sup>

After the architectural flourishing under Ptolemy IV, the number of active building projects went into a steep decline. In contrast to his dynastic predecessors, Ptolemy V Epiphanes (205-180 BCE) is one of the rarest Ptolemies named in temple inscriptions. Work continued on the decoration of the temple at Edfu during his reign, the Anubieion at Saqqara underwent a renovation, and restorations were carried out on the temple of Amun at Karnak where Ptolemy V appears alongside his Syrian wife, Cleopatra I (c. 193-176 BCE).<sup>40</sup> Like the reign of Ptolemy IV, the reign of Ptolemy V was marked by serious turbulence including a succession of regents, a major indigenous revolt in Upper Egypt where the central administration had lost control in the south, and the loss of most of Egypt's foreign possessions.<sup>41</sup> Yet, the difference in levels of building activity under the two monarchs does not echo the similarity of their circumstances.

This was followed by a resurgence of building activity described by Hölbl as the "golden age" of Ptolemaic temple building.<sup>42</sup> Under the brother kings Ptolemy VI Philometor (180-164, 163-145 BCE) and Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II (170-163, 145-116 BCE), who reigned variously alongside Cleopatra II (c. 173-115 BCE) and Cleopatra III Philometor Soteira (c. 144-101 BCE), significant works were undertaken throughout Egypt as far south as Dakka where Ptolemy VI is named in a building inscription, and including substantial additions to Philae and Edfu, while the monumental temple of Sobek and Haroeris at Kom Ombo was begun.<sup>43</sup> While many of the building projects of this period were begun during the reign of Ptolemy VI, they were completed and

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<sup>39</sup> Mahaffy 1895, 272.

<sup>40</sup> Smith and Jeffreys 1980, 23; 1988, 22.

<sup>41</sup> Hölbl 2001, 134-43.

<sup>42</sup> Hölbl 2001, 257.

<sup>43</sup> *Description* vol. 1, pls 39-46; De Morgan et al. 1895-1909; Badawi 1952; Lacau 1952, 221-28; Gutbub 1972, 239-47; 1973; Aufrère, Golvin, and Goyon 1991; Gutbub 1980, 675-683; Arnold 2003, 131.

dedicated in the name of Ptolemy VIII, whose cartouches appear more frequently than those of his brother.<sup>44</sup>

After this second noteworthy increase in building activity, work on indigenous temples decreased once more, although not as drastically as under Ptolemy V. Chapels bearing the cartouches of Ptolemy IX Soter II (116-107, 88-81 BCE) were erected at Kalabsha in Lower Nubia,<sup>45</sup> and both his name and that of his brother, Ptolemy X Alexander I (107-88 BCE), are associated with the continuing decorative programme at Edfu, although they are almost entirely absent from Philae and Kom Ombo. The legacy of their reigns may have been at least partially usurped by Ptolemy XII Neos Dionysos (80-58, 55-51 BCE), under whom building activity increased to a certain extent but whose cartouches may in some instances have been imposed over those of previous kings.<sup>46</sup> Ptolemy XII is associated with several building developments at the temple of Soknebtynis at Tebtunis in the Fayyum,<sup>47</sup> and the great building inscription at Edfu, at least, states that the great temple of Horus at Edfu was completed and formally dedicated under this ruler.<sup>48</sup>

The final phase of Ptolemaic temple building under Cleopatra VII Philopator (51-30 BCE) reached a peak of activity. At the enormous temple of Hathor at Dendara,<sup>49</sup> one of the better preserved temples in Egypt, decoration, if not construction, was begun and the structure was nearly completed during the reign of this queen and her son Ptolemy XV Caesarion (44-30 BCE), although much decoration was also added later.<sup>50</sup> Cleopatra VII's name also appears prominently at Philae and Kom Ombo. With the defeat of the Egyptian navy at Actium and Cleopatra's death in 30 BCE, the Ptolemaic period came to an end and the temples of Egypt passed under the hegemony of the Roman emperors.

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<sup>44</sup> Minas-Nerpel 1996, 51-56; 1997, 87-100.

<sup>45</sup> Gau 1822, pls 17-22; Gauthier 1911-1914; Stock and Siegler 1965; Siegler 1970; Wright 1970; Arnold 1975; Henfling 1980, 295-96; Wright 1987; Arnold 2003, 119.

<sup>46</sup> Hölbl 2001, 271.

<sup>47</sup> Rondot 2004, 17, 19, 125, 137-39, 143, figs 103-05.

<sup>48</sup> Kurth 2004, 45-67.

<sup>49</sup> Mariette 1875; Chassinat 1934-1972; Daumas 1969; 1972, 276-73; Cauville and Gasse 1988, 25-32; Cauville 1990; Arnold 2003, 68-70.

<sup>50</sup> Minas-Nerpel 2012, 368.

### *The Roman Period*

After the Roman conquest of Egypt transformed the nation from a monarchy to a province, sweeping changes within the country must have been expected. However, although the monarchy was replaced with a Roman prefect at Alexandria, the Ptolemaic temple building programme continued with little obvious change at first.<sup>51</sup> Construction of many temples begun by the preceding Ptolemaic rulers carried on, and the names and images of early Roman emperors appear on many major complexes. However, beyond this apparent continuity, a significant distinction exists between the building activity of the Ptolemaic and Roman periods: while a great number of the monumental structures completed under the Ptolemies had been begun during their dynasty, construction under the Romans was largely restricted to the extension, enlargement, and decoration of existing complexes. Under the Ptolemies, construction was carried out on such an intensive scale that some early Ptolemaic structures were replaced by later ones, as seen in blocks bearing the name of Ptolemy I reused as paving in the outer court of the main temple at Edfu, which was completed under Ptolemy XII.<sup>52</sup> By contrast, some constructions begun under the Romans were never finished, and entirely new constructions were initiated much less frequently and on a lesser overall scale than under their Ptolemaic predecessors.

The reign of Augustus (30 BCE-14 CE) is largely an exception to this general observation. During his rule, several noteworthy structures at Philae were begun, including the two colonnades flanking the processional way leading to the First Pylon, and a barque station, identified as the largest free-standing kiosk in Egypt.<sup>53</sup> Significant construction during this time also took place at the Ptolemaic complex of Dendara, where Augustus' name is found in both the sanctuary of Hathor-Isis and the birth house that replaced that of Nectanebo I.<sup>54</sup> Other constructions attributed to Augustus include the

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<sup>51</sup> Minas-Nerpel 2012, 362.

<sup>52</sup> Baines 2014, personal communication.

<sup>53</sup> Arnold 2003, 25.

<sup>54</sup> Daumas 1959; 1969; Cauville 1990; 1992, 31-48; Arnold 2003, 68-70.

small temple of Isis, Peteisis, and Pahor at Dendur,<sup>55</sup> two small temples at Tafa,<sup>56</sup> and the dromos at the temple of Soknebtynis at Tebtunis in the Fayyum.<sup>57</sup> The most significant project begun under Augustus was the temple of Mandulis and Isis at Kalabsha;<sup>58</sup> a monumental gate erected under Augustus was actually torn down later in his reign indicating a great deal of activity here, but the temple was never fully completed.<sup>59</sup>

Similar to inscription practices during the Ptolemaic period, many of the structures that bear the name and image of Augustus were either continuations of previous projects or were finished under his successors and so bear the names of additional rulers. One example of this is seen in the forecourt of the temple of Kom Ombo, where the name of Augustus is found on the walls, and that of his successor Tiberius (14-37 CE) on the columns.<sup>60</sup> Much of the work carried out under Augustus was continued into the reign of Tiberius and the first century CE, including the decoration of the colonnades at Philae; the pronaos of the temple of Hathor at Dendara was also built during this time.<sup>61</sup> The core of the temple of Shanhûr was built under Augustus with significant additional construction under Tiberius, although decoration of the temple continued until the carving of a few final relief scenes under Trajan.<sup>62</sup> One notable example of continued building and inscriptions can be seen at Thebes, where work continued in many different areas from the reign of Augustus through that of Antoninus Pius.<sup>63</sup>

Two monumental gateways of the temple of Min at Koptos have been dated respectively to the reign of Tiberius' successor Caligula (37-41 CE), and that of Claudius

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<sup>55</sup> Gau 1822, pls 23-26; Prisse d' Avennes 1878, pl. 10; Blackman 1911; Bresciani 1975, 1603-64; Aldred 1978; el-Achiri, Aly, Hamid, and Leblanc 1972, 1979; Arnold 2003, 70.

<sup>56</sup> Gau 1822, pls 10-11; Schneider 1979; Raven 1996; Arnold 2003, 237.

<sup>57</sup> Rondot 2004, 145; 149.

<sup>58</sup> Gau 1822, pls 17-22; Gauthier, 1911-1914; Stock and Siegler 1965; Siegler 1970; Wright 1970; Arnold 1975; Henfling 1980, 295-96; Wright 1987; Arnold 2003, 119; Bagnall and Rathbone 2004, 246-47.

<sup>59</sup> Winter 2003, 197-200, 212.

<sup>60</sup> Arnold 1999, 232, 235.

<sup>61</sup> McKenzie 2007, 138; *Description* vol. 1, pl. 5, 8; Sauneron and Stierlin 1978, n. 34, 150-53; Sharpe 1842, 19.

<sup>62</sup> Willems, Coppens, and De Meyer 2003, 5-8.

<sup>63</sup> Klotz 2012b, 381-82.

(41-54 CE).<sup>64</sup> Construction of the monumental pronaos of the temple of Khnum at Esna also began under Claudius,<sup>65</sup> as did the erection of a small temple dedicated to Min, Isis, and Horus at El-Qala<sup>66</sup> (this particular temple has also been dated alternatively to the time of Augustus<sup>67</sup>).

From this point onward, beyond the continued decoration of existing structures, construction of Egyptian temples fell into a significant decline. The cartouches of Claudius' successor, Nero (54-68 CE), can be found on the screen walls at Kom Ombo and in the temple of Isis and Serapis at Hieria Sykaminos (al-Maharraqa);<sup>68</sup> his image is also depicted in the temple of Min at Koptos.<sup>69</sup> Similarly, the decoration of the exterior walls of the temple of Montu at Medamud is attributed to Domitian (81-96 CE) and Trajan (98-117 CE),<sup>70</sup> the reliefs along the exterior of Augustus' monumental kiosk at Philae and several additions to the temple at Panopolis (Akhmin) are attributed to Trajan alone,<sup>71</sup> and the cartouches of Hadrian (117-138 CE) can be found in the birth house of Augustus at Dendara.<sup>72</sup>

A final Roman-period push in indigenous temple construction can be seen under Antoninus Pius (138-161 CE). While the name of this emperor is primarily linked with decoration, such as that on the temple of Montu at Medamud, he is also credited with a certain amount of building activity, including a gate of the temple of Montu at Armant and, most notably, at the temple of Amun at Medinet Habu, where a pronaos and large forecourt was begun but never completed.<sup>73</sup>

After Antoninus Pius, the construction of indigenous Egyptian temple structures largely came to an end, while the work that did continue – decorative programmes and

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<sup>64</sup> Gray 2010, 96.

<sup>65</sup> Sauneron 1968, vol. 2, 41-42; 1977, 30-34; McKenzie 2007, 138.

<sup>66</sup> Gray 2010, 96.

<sup>67</sup> Arnold 2003, 86.

<sup>68</sup> Gau 1822, n. 55, pl. 40-41; Maspero 1911, pl. 99-109; Murray 1931, n. 33, 216-18; Arnold 1999, 244, fig. 207; McKenzie 2007, 138.

<sup>69</sup> Murray 1931, 50.

<sup>70</sup> Gray 2010, 94.

<sup>71</sup> Kuhlmann 1983, 14-16, 25, 41, 43.

<sup>72</sup> Gray 2010, 64.

<sup>73</sup> McKenzie 2007, 140-41, Gray 2010, 76, Arnold 1999, 194-96, fig. 145, 147, 12 plan 7; 2003, 144.

repairs to existing structures – slowly dropped off as well.<sup>74</sup> The cartouches of later emperors – including Marcus Aurelius (161-180 CE), Commodus (180-192 CE), Septimius Severus (193-211 CE), and Caracalla (211-217 CE) – continue to appear on temple walls until 249-51 CE, when the name of Decius was inscribed at Philae. After this, all official work on Egyptian temples ceased. The conversion under Diocletian (285-305 CE) of the Temple of Amun at Luxor into a Roman military fortress, complete with a painted Imperial Chapel in the former first vestibule of the temple, clearly marks the cessation of Roman support to the indigenous temples.<sup>75</sup>

### **Funding of Temples: State and Priestly Agency**

Beyond mere places of worship, monumental Egyptian temples were viewed literally as houses of the gods where the divine was physically rooted on earth.<sup>76</sup> These structures were the essential hubs of indigenous religion, and the pattern of temple building under the Ptolemies and Romans is thus significant for understanding the status of indigenous religious culture during these periods. The picture is far more complex than a simple story of decline. I argue here that both the proliferation of sacred construction under the Ptolemies and its ebb under the Romans from the late first century CE onward are tied to the political influence and economic prosperity of these institutions and its representatives.

That the change in the circumstances of these institutions was economic in nature and not due to a decline in indigenous religious culture is shown clearly in the stylistic and intellectual dynamism visible throughout the Ptolemaic and Roman periods in the construction and decoration of indigenous temples, which continued to develop and evolve even as building activity slowed. Not only do the temples continue to adhere to traditional architectural designs and iconography in a way that demonstrates a sense of security in their traditional identity, but there are also several distinct instances of

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<sup>74</sup> See Bagnall 1995, 262; Grenier 1989, n. 59; McKenzie 2007, 141.

<sup>75</sup> Klotz 2012b, 374-75.

<sup>76</sup> Dunand and Zivie-Coche 2004, 83-85, 86-88.

innovation unique to this time.<sup>77</sup> A notable example of this is the emergence of two new architectural features, namely the *wabet* or “pure place”, most often consisting of a chapel and open court, and the *mammisi* or birth house, a separate structure commemorating the birth of a god that originated earlier but developed significantly in the Ptolemaic and Roman periods. Neither the *wabet* nor the birth house is attested widely before the periods under study but both are included in many of the major temples discussed here.<sup>78</sup> Another testament to the cultural vitality that characterised temple complexes is the striking stylistic development of “composite” column capitals, which combined more than one plant form and became unprecedentedly elaborate.<sup>79</sup> The propensity for development seen in these architectural examples is paralleled in indigenous written culture, specifically in the proliferation of the hieroglyphic script. During the Ptolemaic and Roman periods, hieroglyphs not only reached a new level of extravagance and complexity but also remained almost entirely uninfluenced by the Greek language.<sup>80</sup> This is seen in the inscribed texts that cover temple walls to an unprecedented degree during this time.<sup>81</sup>

The appearance of the *wabet* and *mammisi*, development of new styles of column capitals, and the flowering of hieroglyphs show that the architectural, written, and visual culture of indigenous religion remained very consciously traditional but was capable of stylistic evolution, demonstrating a significant degree of cultural confidence. This highlights the fact that the factors responsible for the decrease in the construction of major temples outlined here must have been located outside of these spheres.

It is clear from observing the surviving edifices of this period, even in their patchy and largely ruined states, that their construction and decoration required an enormous expenditure of labour and resources. Egypt always contained minor shrines and local sanctuaries constructed of inexpensive materials.<sup>82</sup> Smaller temples were also

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<sup>77</sup> See Baines 2004, 39.

<sup>78</sup> See Arnold 2003, 255; Coppens and Preys 2000, 112; Coppens 2007, 10.

<sup>79</sup> McKenzie 2007, 125-31.

<sup>80</sup> Houston, Baines, and Cooper 2003, 440-43; Baines 2004, 39-41; Klotz 2012a, 563.

<sup>81</sup> See Coppens and Preys 2000, 113; Klotz 2012a, 564-65.

<sup>82</sup> Frankfurter 1998, 98.

built in with great frequency during the Ptolemaic and Roman periods, and most of these adhered to indigenous form and style just like the larger examples. However, compared with the major complexes, little else is known of these smaller structures. Not only did the major temples involve the largest investments, they were also the central points in networks of sacred institutions throughout Egypt. Therefore, I address only the more prominent structures here.

In a land where pharaohs traditionally inhabited palaces of mud brick,<sup>83</sup> the construction of even a relatively small stone chapel should be understood as representing a notable outlay of resources. The enormous indigenous temple complexes mentioned above indicate an exceptional level of prosperity in Egypt at the time that they were made. However it has remained unclear how this prosperity was harnessed to pay for these structures. The question is dominated by two distinct primary entities: the ruling elite of the central state, in the persons of the Ptolemaic monarchs and Roman emperors; and the indigenous elite, a group which at this point is closely identifiable with the priestly class affiliated with the temples.<sup>84</sup>

Temple inscriptions such as the Edfu Donation Text discussed below describe contemporary rulers as patrons and benefactors of the houses of the gods.<sup>85</sup> However, the complexity of these traditional roles suggests that the rulers would not have been able to fill them effectively without the advice and assistance of the indigenous priests. Consequently, the extent to which the architectural traditions of indigenous religious culture could continue must have been dependent on the willingness of the rulers to confer with an elite indigenous group and to permit it to manage resources in necessary abundance. The building of indigenous temples in the Ptolemaic and Roman periods can therefore reveal much about the status of indigenous religious institutions and their representatives in Egypt at this time. To this end, I examine the roles played by the

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<sup>83</sup> Janssen 1978, 220; Robins 2008, 136.

<sup>84</sup> Baines 2004, 33-61; Manning 2012, 97; Monson 2012, 211.

<sup>85</sup> Porter and Moss 1939, 167, 337-44; De Wit 1961, 56-97, 277-320; Meeks 1972, 19-52; Cauville and Devauchelle 1984b, 31-55.

administration and the indigenous elite or priestly class in these sacred building programmes.

### ***Temple Funding in the Ptolemaic Period***

#### *Role of the Rulers*

##### Nature of the Rulers' Involvement

The texts of the buildings themselves, including temple wall inscriptions and stelae, are the most immediate evidence for the circumstances of the temples' construction. These regularly declare that the ruler in power at the time of the construction of each edifice was directly responsible for its existence.<sup>86</sup> Accompanied by the cartouches and often the image of the reigning pharaoh, many texts state explicitly that the ruler enabled the construction of the temple through grants of land, offerings, and even the personal contribution of physical labour (certainly ceremonial in nature).<sup>87</sup>

One important example of such an inscription is that known as the Edfu Donation Text,<sup>88</sup> which is inscribed on the outer façade of the great retaining wall of the temple of Horus at Edfu, a massive complex begun under Ptolemy III (246-221 BCE) and completed during the reign of Ptolemy XII (80-51 BCE). The text commemorates the gifting of a large amount of land by Ptolemy X (107-88 BCE) to “his father Horus ... and to all the gods of Edfu, for their daily offering”. The essential role of the rulers in temple funding is demonstrated by the description of the king confirming the temple's possession of property, showing that this was not a unique occasion but that he was continuing a tradition of his forebears. While the text does not specify that the revenue from these properties was intended for funding the construction work, which was nearly finished by this time, such a sizeable grant would probably have contributed to the costs of the ongoing improvements, in addition to providing for a “daily offering”.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> See Spencer 2010, 441.

<sup>87</sup> Eyre 2010, 117-18.

<sup>88</sup> Porter and Moss 1939, 167, 337-44; De Wit 1961, 56-97, 277-320; Meeks 1972, 19-52; Cauville and Devauchelle 1984b, 31-55.

<sup>89</sup> Translation in Manning 2003, 245-66.

A second inscription at Edfu implies the king's direct involvement in the creation of the temple. In the Great Building Description, which outlines the history of the temple's construction, the building is described as "constructed for [the god] by his beloved heir, the King of Upper and Lower Egypt". The temples of Egypt are referred to collectively as "the perfect and excellent monuments created by His Majesty and his forefathers. Their names were carved in them with bronze (tools), so that...their names might be as enduring as their monuments, so that the gods might be praised because of His Majesty and his work". The statement in a subsequent passage that "The King himself...established the plan of the First Shrine (Edfu)" asserts the king's part in the construction project even more directly.<sup>90</sup>

While such inscriptions declare the role of the rulers in making the temples, they do not explicitly refer to financial contributions. This is addressed most directly in a separate group of texts known as the sacerdotal or synodal decrees, which record collective statements issued by indigenous priests who assembled at either Alexandria or Memphis for annual 'synods'.<sup>91</sup> The decrees are preserved on an assortment of stelae, including the two with Canopus decrees, the Great Mendes Stela, the Pithom Stela, and the Rosetta Stone, as well as several other less famous examples indicating that the issuance of such decrees was a relatively common occurrence.<sup>92</sup> The earliest of these, known as the Satrap Stela, dates to the very beginning of Ptolemaic rule in Egypt having been created when Ptolemy I ruled Egypt in the name of Alexander's infant son, showing that this was a basic and familiar practice for the dynasty.<sup>93</sup> These stelae would have been erected in the outer courts of temples where they were technically accessible to at least part of the public.<sup>94</sup> The formation of these synods is mentioned in the Rosetta Stone, which records a royal favour releasing the priests from the yearly obligation to travel to

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<sup>90</sup> Translation in Kurth 2004, 45-67.

<sup>91</sup> Manning 2012, 97-101.

<sup>92</sup> See e.g. Tietze, Lange, and Hallof 2005, 1-7; Eldamaty 2005, 74-86; Thiers 2009, 41-49; El-Masri, Altenmüller, and Thissen 2012, 22-25.

<sup>93</sup> Cairo JdE 22182; W. K. Simpson 2003, 392-97.

<sup>94</sup> Hölbl 2001, 106; Manning 2012, 100, n. 107.

Alexandria for the assembly.<sup>95</sup> This indicates that the synod was probably a Ptolemaic innovation instigated by the rulers, and significantly shows direct interaction between the indigenous religious elite and the central state as discussed below.

Although not a synodal decree in the strict sense, the Satrap Stela (311 BCE)<sup>96</sup> shows the Ptolemies in consultation with the priestly elite regarding the endowment of religious institutions from the very beginning of their reign.

This great Prince was seeking benefactions for the gods of Upper and Lower Egypt, with the result that those who were beside him together with the grandees of Lower Egypt said to him: “The northern marshland, whose name is The Land of Edjo, the King of Upper and Lower Egypt... gave it to the gods of Pe and Dep...” Then his Majesty said to those who were beside him: “This marshland, inform me (about it)!” so that they said before His Majesty: “...it formerly belonged to the gods of Pe and Dep, before the enemy Xerxes revoked it. He did not make offerings from it to the gods of Pe and Dep.”

By referring to the donation of the last pharaoh, recognised as the legitimate King of Upper and Lower Egypt, as well as to the revocation of this grant by Xerxes, described as the enemy, the text shows clearly that the Ptolemies were aware of the significance of the king’s role in endowing indigenous cults from the very beginning of their dynasty.

Then His Majesty said: “Let the priests and high dignitaries of Pe and Dep be brought!”.... Then the priests and high dignitaries of Pe and Dep said: “Let Your Majesty command to give back the northern marshland, whose name is The Land of Edjo, to the gods of Pe and Dep.... Let its renewal be heralded in your name regarding its donation to the gods of Pe and Dep a second time in exchange for making your deeds successful.” Then this great Prince said: “(By order of) Ptolemy the Satrap. The Land of Edjo, I shall give it... together with the donation made by the King of Upper and Lower Egypt.... Ptolemy has renewed the donations to the gods of Pe and Dep forever...”

This reported conversation represents Ptolemy I in direct contact with the priestly elite, soliciting their advice on how to play the part of the ruler correctly with regard to the indigenous religious institutions and accepting their advice in full.

One of the earliest synodal decrees, known as the Mendes Stela (c. 264-247 BCE),<sup>97</sup> records a series of benefactions made by Ptolemy II (285-246 BCE) to the

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<sup>95</sup> Manning 2012, 97.

<sup>96</sup> Cairo JdE 22182; translation in W. K. Simpson 2003, 392-97.

temple of the ram god Banebjed in the Delta city of Mendes. The text makes play with the direct and continuing agency of the king in the construction of the temple.

Le dieu bon [Ptolemy II] qui a engendré pour fonder les provinces et pour forger les nomes de dieu.... protégeant l’Égypte, faisant prospérer les temples.... tous les temples débordant de ses offrandes.... Sa Majesté inspecta le Château de Béliers et Elle constata que des travaux étaient en cours dans la Maison du Bélier, selon l’ordre de Sa Majesté de réparer les dégâts que les barbares maudits lui avaient causés. Sa Majesté ordonna de l’achever comme une oeuvre [d’Elle] pour l’éternité. Sa Majesté examina la résidence de l’auguste belier et Elle y fit faire des restaurations....(Ainsi) Sa Majesté donna ses directives dans le temple de cette ville en rendant hommage aux béliers divins, comme il fut trouvé dans les écritures de Thoth..<sup>98</sup>

Similarly, the Canopus Decree of 238 BCE<sup>99</sup> records a decree made by an assembly of Egyptian priests in honour of Ptolemy III (246-221 BCE), his queen Berenice II, and his daughter Princess Berenice, out of gratitude for various favours bestowed by the royal family.

On this day, a decree of the *mr-šn* priests and the *hm-ntr* priests, and the priests who enter the sanctuary to perform clothing rituals for the gods, and the scribes of the divine book and the scribes of the House of Life and the other priests who have come from the temples of Egypt... who have assembled at the temple of the Beneficent Gods, which is in Canopus, and who have said: Whereas King Ptolemy, son of Ptolemy and Arsinoe the Brother-and-Sister Gods, and Queen Berenice his sister and his wife, the Beneficent Gods, are wont to grant many benefits to the temples of Egypt at all times, and greatly to increase the honours of the gods; and also at all times to care for what concerns Apis and Mnevis, and the rest of the sacred animals which are honoured in Egypt; and to expend money and to prepare many things on behalf of the divine images which the Persians took away from Egypt.... It has seemed fitting to the priests who are in Egypt to cause that the honours which are due to King Ptolemy and Queen Berenice... should be increased; and the priests who are in each of the temples of Egypt should be named ‘The Priests of the Beneficent Gods’ in addition to their other priestly title... and a new phyle should be created among the priests who are in the temples in addition to the four phylai which exist now...

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<sup>97</sup> Cairo CG 22181; UPZ 2.28-54; Kamal 1905, I 159-68; II pls 54-55; Clarysse 2007, 201-06; translation in Birch 1873, 91-102.

<sup>98</sup> Translation in Meulenaere 1976, 174-77.

<sup>99</sup> OGIS 1.56; Thompson 2012, n. 1, 133; Hölbl 2001, 106-11; Pfeiffer 2004; Austin 2006, 470-74 no. 271; McKenzie 2007, 58, 124; Manning 2012, 97-101; translation in R. S. Simpson 1996, 225-41.

In this decree, the monarchs are shown granting many important benefits to the temples of Egypt, including caring for the sacred bulls Apis and Mnevis, and providing for their cults. The king is also honoured by the creation of a new priesthood of the royal cult to be installed in temples throughout Egypt. While the inscription does not refer to financial support in detail, it is clear that the audience was meant to understand that the king was closely involved with and directly patronising Egypt's temples.

The most famous of the synodal decrees is that on the Rosetta Stone, known as the Decree of Memphis.<sup>100</sup> This inscription records a decree made in 196 BCE in favour of Ptolemy V, in which the priests pledge specific honours to the king in return for various concessions and boons that he has granted to them. In addition to crediting Ptolemy V with tax exemptions and other administrative triumphs, the text describes the king as having a “heart beneficent concerning the gods,” and “having undertaken great expenses in order to create peace in Egypt and to establish the temples”. More specifically, the text goes on to state that he “did many favours” for the cults of Apis and Mnevis, including paying for their enormously expensive funerals (involving the vast quantities of luxury materials with which the animals were interred), providing the means for burnt offerings to be made, and establishing other unspecified honours “due to the temples”. Finally, the text states that Ptolemy V spent a great deal of gold and silver on the decoration of the temple of Apis, and that he

...had new temples, sanctuaries, and altars set up for the gods, and caused others to assume their (proper) condition, he having the heart of a beneficent god concerning the gods and enquiring after the honours of the temples, in order to renew them in his time as king in the manner that is fitting.

These texts exemplify the language used by dedicatory inscriptions in perpetuating the traditional scenario of sacred institutions endowed by a pious and generous ruler. The truth of such claims can be questioned; for example, the fact that Ptolemy V was a boy of about thirteen in 196 when the Rosetta Stone was dedicated does not support the idea of spontaneous royal initiative indicated by the text. However,

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<sup>100</sup> SB 5.8299; OGIS 1.90; SEG 18.634; Ray 2007, 164-70; Valbelle 1999, 87-90; translation in R. S. Simpson 1996, 258-71.

Egyptian pharaohs who were children, such as Tutankhamun, often had decrees inscribed in their names;<sup>101</sup> and the detail itself is significant, as it shows that the bequests of the Ptolemies were at least in part an element of continuing dynastic policy.

That the ebb and flow of this activity was at times linked to the contemporary political context is indicated by significant instances of generosity at times of increased instability.<sup>102</sup> All of the texts discussed above recording royal benefactions date to the turbulent century of the six Syrian Wars fought between Egypt and the Seleukid Empire (274-168 BCE).<sup>103</sup> Yet significant increases and decreases of building activity, notably those under Ptolemies IV, V, and IV mentioned above, all occurred during this turbulent time. This suggests that the programme of sacred construction was only loosely linked to the current situation of the dynasty.

The official and public nature of these documents, inscribed on walls and stelae in outer courts, shows that the Ptolemies were conscious of being presented as contributors to the indigenous cults. The synodal decrees present the Ptolemies as actively conferring with the indigenous priesthods, demonstrating that this group and the institutions that they represented continued to enjoy a high status. Inscribed in Greek, Demotic, and hieroglyphs, with evidence of some Greek influence in the structure of the Demotic, the texts are nevertheless almost wholly Egyptian in nature.<sup>104</sup> The inscription of these official decrees in a range of languages shows that the stelae were meant to address as wide an audience as possible, and demonstrates that the occurrence of synods was meant to be public knowledge, emphasising even more the standing of indigenous religious culture within the state. Although the extent to which the rulers encouraged or personally approved these texts is not known, they must have at least approved the spread of this message throughout their kingdom. While the decrees do not make clear the full nature of the temples' economic support, it is safe to conclude that the Ptolemies desired to be formally recognised as temple builders and financial patrons.

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<sup>101</sup> Silverman 2006, 173-78, fig. 145.

<sup>102</sup> Hölbl 2001, 153-59.

<sup>103</sup> Green 1990, 146, 148, 150, 289-90, 304-05, 429-32; Hölbl 2001, 16-18, 39-40, 48-51, 54, 81, 127-52, 305-07; Grainger 2010, 72-87, 117-36, 153-70, 195-218, 219-43, 245-72, 291-308.

<sup>104</sup> R. S. Simpson 1996, 22-24.

### Extent of the Rulers' Financial Involvement

It is next necessary to investigate the extent to which the Ptolemies were involved financially in temple construction and decoration, by examining the nature of the funds with which the projects were undertaken and how these funds were administered.

Egypt's land was traditionally seen as the property of the pharaoh, who supposedly ruled the land as a master over a household.<sup>105</sup> At this system's most basic level, natural resources belonged not to the community in general or to individual owners but to the king. Accordingly, revenues were automatically due to the royal treasury, after which the administration would re-disperse the wealth as it saw fit. Since the Ptolemies were technically the direct successors of the pharaohs, this personal ownership of Egypt's revenues applied to them as well, at least in theory. Of course, the reality was much more complex.

From the Greek and Demotic papyri providing the majority of evidence for the Ptolemaic economy, multiple classes of land can be identified, including royal land, private land, cleruchic land, gift estates, and temple land.<sup>106</sup> Royal land seems to have comprised the largest percentage of the country, and is likely best understood against the background of notionally royal ownership discussed above. In keeping with this, private land that could be inherited as well as bought and sold has been understood as a subcategory of royal land, transferable between private persons but still ultimately under royal ownership.<sup>107</sup> While this view has been challenged,<sup>108</sup> the reality of private ownership, including questions such as alienability and rights of inheritance, remains unclear. Cleruchic land consisted of plots of previously royal land granted to immigrant soldiers whom the Ptolemies settled throughout the countryside,<sup>109</sup> while the category of gift estates was apparently limited to grants made to Hellenised elites in the Fayyum in

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<sup>105</sup> Janssen 1978, 223-25; Eyre 1987, 39-40; Lehner 2000, 280.

<sup>106</sup> Monson 2012, 75-79.

<sup>107</sup> Préaux 1939, 166, 185, 496.

<sup>108</sup> See Manning 2003, 193-97; Monson 2012, 79.

<sup>109</sup> Préaux 1939, 463-77; Monson 2012, 77-78; Fischer-Bovet 2014, 208-13.

the third century BCE.<sup>110</sup> Distinct from the previous four categories, temple land comprised properties that were, and often had long been, under the control of indigenous religious institutions.<sup>111</sup>

The government of the Ptolemies received revenue from two primary sources: rent from those inhabiting royal land as tenants, and taxes levied on industries and properties.<sup>112</sup> The Decree of Memphis and Canopus Decree discussed above portray the temples as being regularly exempted from tax levies, an act of royal piety equated with temple building and cult endowment. The benefactions nevertheless make it clear that the temples and sacred land associated with them were liable to taxation. Thus, the gods' land was also, in some sense, the king's land, since it received a certain income from temple property in addition to the revenues that the crown received from the land under its direct control.

As absolute monarchs receiving revenue from almost every corner of a country whose economic prosperity at this time was legendary,<sup>113</sup> the Ptolemies maintained an extremely high degree of affluence that extended to their court and wider government.<sup>114</sup> Diodorus Siculus, writing in the first half of the first century BCE, stated that the king of Egypt received more than six thousand talents in revenue a year.<sup>115</sup> Yet, Jan Quaegebeur argued that the Ptolemies could not have financed indigenous temple construction due to a general frugality that led them to conserve their economic resources whenever possible.<sup>116</sup> In support of this, he argued that Hellenic soldiers were placed on cleruchic land throughout the countryside in order to free the crown from the expenses of their maintenance in state-appointed barracks. If the rulers were hesitant to spend money on the army, he believed, they certainly would not have used resources on indigenous temples with which they had no personal connection. However, the creation of cleruchies

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<sup>110</sup> Rostovtzeff 1922, 42-55; Monson 2012, 78.

<sup>111</sup> Capponi 2005, 98-99; Rowlandson 1996, 61-62.

<sup>112</sup> Manning 2003, 53.

<sup>113</sup> Herodas 1.26-35; Theocritus 17.77-95.

<sup>114</sup> See Manning 2003, 126.

<sup>115</sup> Diodorus Siculus 17.52.

<sup>116</sup> Quaegebeur 1979, 713.

is easily explained by a number of non-fiscal motives, from spreading Hellenic culture throughout the country, preventing military disgruntlement, diffusing native nationalism by encouraging the mixing of the two populations, or bringing new land under cultivation in the Fayyum.<sup>117</sup> By suggesting that even the king would have considered such projects with caution, Quaegebeur highlights the massive expenditure that this construction required. Nonetheless, it is hard to reconcile Ptolemaic displays of royal wealth with a straightforward sense of thrift.

The Ptolemies' willingness to spend their riches is mentioned by ancient authors describing the staging of expensive royal spectacles. These include Plutarch's famous description of the opulent barge of Cleopatra VII and Callixenus' depiction of an ostentatious festival procession under Ptolemy II, in which, Mahaffy observed, "We seem to see a Hellenistic king spending millions upon a Hellenistic feast."<sup>118</sup> Such accounts show that the wealth and extravagance of the Ptolemies was exceptional, suggesting that they controlled enough resources to account for funding much of the indigenous building programme.

The inscriptions discussed above suggest the extent to which indigenous construction projects were funded by state wealth. The Canopus Decree refers to "many and great benefactions" and "great expense and abundance" distributed by the monarchs, while the Decree of Memphis records that the king gifted "much money and much grain to the temples of Egypt". Far more than formulaic records of generic benevolence, the texts also include much more specific statements.

For example, the Edfu Donation Text records that Ptolemy X granted a large amount of land to "the gods of Edfu, for their daily offering," clearly identifying the temple as the recipient of the benefaction. The inscription goes on to record the location, size, and nature of the donated properties in meticulous detail, noting the character of the soil, crops produced, proximity to water, and other enterprises entailed on the land, such

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<sup>117</sup> See Hölbl 2001, 157, 159 n. 34.

<sup>118</sup> Plutarch *Antony* 26; Callixenus 5.25; Mahaffy 1899, 128; Rice 1983, 9-25.

as brick kilns.<sup>119</sup> The specificity of this text shows that such donation records were not laudatory ritual formulae, but represented real dispositions significant enough to have the details inscribed in stone. In listing the potential revenue for each individual property, the Donation Text shows that the temple expected to derive an important income from these gifts of land. While the text does not specify that the revenue from these properties was intended for funding construction work taking place (nearly complete by this time), a grant of this size could certainly have contributed to the cost of the ongoing improvements, such as decorative work that would have required fewer resources, as well as providing for a “daily offering” as the text asserts. The text thus demonstrates that temple resources came at least partly from land given as royal gifts, the revenue of which became the property of the temple and which the temple – not the state – then administered, despite being sourced from a state gift.

The Mendes Stela (c. 264-247 BCE) is similarly specific in describing the nature of royal temple patronage.

Comme faisant son père, le grand dieu, avant lui... Quant aux revenus alimentaires de toute ville et de tout nome, versés à la maison royale, Sa Majesté ordonna de ne pas percevoir les revenus alimentaires du domaine sacré de Banebded et de son district, ayant eu connaissance du décret que Thoth avait rédigé à coté de Rê à l'intention des rois de Haute et de Basse Egypte à venir. En voici les paroles: ‘En vérité, il sera heureux [pour le roi de Haute et de Basse Egypte?] d’accroître les provisions du belier vivant; en vérité il sera profitable au roi de Haute et de Basse Egypte d’accroître les provisions de Banebded en vue d’augmenter les offrandes divines, d’élargir son territoire, de faire toutes choses utiles pour sa demeure.<sup>120</sup>

This decree not only proclaims the direct and sustained agency of the king in the physical construction of the temple, but refers to substantial royal contributions intended for the embellishment of the temple itself. The statement that the temple and its associated district were released from paying a tax also shows that the cult received economically preferential treatment.

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<sup>119</sup> Translation in Manning 2003, 245-66.

<sup>120</sup> Translation in Meulenaere 1976, 174-77.

A roughly contemporary decree recorded on the Pithom Stela (264/3 BCE)<sup>121</sup> from the reign of Ptolemy II is similarly informative.

[Ptolemy II] founded a large royal city and gave it the great name of *Berenice* the daughter of King Ptolemaeus. A temple was built in honour of Queen Arsinoe Philadelphus. [The king] placed images [statues] of his divine sister in the temple. All the ceremonies were practiced by the priests in connection with the building of the temple of their father Atum, the Great God, who dwells in the city of Teku [Pithom], like it is made in all the temples of Upper and Lower Egypt.

Year 21, month 4 of winter under his majesty: list of things, which his majesty gave as provisions to the temples of Upper and Lower Egypt: revenue extracted from the houses of Ta-Meri [Egypt]: silver 90,000; revenue extracted from the people as tax on every first day of the year: silver 660,000.

The text not only shows the king actively involved in creating a temple likened to “all the temples in Upper and Lower Egypt”, but also demonstrates the financial nature of the king’s patronage by listing specific monetary amounts given to the indigenous temples of Egypt as a group.

The system by which the temples acquired revenue and applied it to their building projects is indicated even more precisely by the Rosetta Stone (196 BCE). The text begins by stating that Ptolemy V “has given much money and much grain to the temples of Egypt.” Instead of leaving the details of this grant to be imagined, as in the Canopus Decree, the Rosetta Stone records that,

[the king] ordered concerning the endowments of the gods, and the money and the grain that are given as allowances to their [temples] each year, and the shares that belong to the gods from the vineyards, the orchards, and all the rest of the property which they possessed under his father, that they should remain in their possession...<sup>122</sup>

The text therefore states plainly that the great temples of Egypt were endowed with direct annual allowances of ready assets (including both money and grain) that were given to the temples from the state. It is also clear that the property possessed by the temples, apparently granted or at least confirmed in their holding by the state, was another source of institutional income. The agency of the state in the temples’ possession

<sup>121</sup> Cairo CG 22183; Hölbl 2001, 82 fig. 3.1; Thiers 2007; translation in Mueller 2006, 192.

<sup>122</sup> Translation in R. S. Simpson 1996, 258-71.

of this property is indicated by both the Edfu Donation Text, and the Decree of Memphis, which credits the king for confirming the temples' possession of their property. Both texts imply ultimate state control over temple land-holdings. While the inscriptions do not state that funds acquired in this way were applied directly to building programmes, the Rosetta Stone's claim that Ptolemy V "had new temples, sanctuaries, and altars set up for the gods" after the list of financial benefactions suggests that this is probably what was intended.

These texts outline a scenario in which temples received enormous grants from the state in the form of both land and revenues, which they used to fund new building projects while ascribing the credit of the work to the rulers. The acknowledged wealth of the Ptolemies, along with their displays of extravagance, support these accounts of enormous royal endowments lavished upon the temples. The evidence thus indicates that the state played a primary role in financing temple construction and improvements.

#### The Rulers' Incentives for Encouraging Temple Construction

It must be considered next why the Ptolemies participated in the erection of indigenous sacred structures. These rulers, the successors of Alexander the Great, were Hellenic in both ethnicity and culture, and they administered their kingdom from the primarily Hellenistic city of Alexandria.<sup>123</sup> Yet, the foreign character of the monarchy did not lead them to discriminate against the indigenous cults. It was instead a powerful reason for the involvement of its members in Egyptian temple construction, ever since Ptolemy I realised the country's potential and came to understand how best to control it. Rather than subjugating the indigenous population by force, it was far preferable for the Ptolemies to portray themselves as the legitimate rulers of Egypt and rightful successors of the indigenous pharaohs, so that they were obeyed not from fear of punishment but in harmony with inherited norms.<sup>124</sup> In a largely non-literate society,<sup>125</sup> this message was conveyed most effectively by depicting the new rulers on highly visible indigenous

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<sup>123</sup> See Fraser 1972 vol. 1, 107; Bowman 1990, 204.

<sup>124</sup> See Bingen 2007, 15-30; McKenzie 2007, 35; Manning 2012, 80-102.

<sup>125</sup> See Depauw 2012, 499-500.

monuments in the traditional role of the pharaohs. For those who could read and pass the information on to others, the Ptolemaic administration ensured that the narrative of their benevolence to the temples in the ancient role of temple donors and their close relationship with the indigenous priests was disseminated as widely as possible by producing official stelae in the three most common languages in the country. Furthermore, by being publicly depicted in traditional representations as the protagonists in temple reliefs and in their sacred ideological function as sole intermediaries between Egypt's people and the gods, the Ptolemies solidified the link between their administration and the dynasties of the past.

In assuming the role of munificent supporters of the temples of Egypt, the Ptolemies must have also hoped to earn the goodwill of the indigenous priesthoods. Manning describes this strategy as forming a 'ruling coalition'<sup>126</sup> to counteract the development of internal dissent and insurgency and guard against future uprisings. As the highest echelon of indigenous society at this time, Egypt's priestly elite wielded a considerable amount of power and influence. This was due not only to their position as the economic upper class but also to their roles as custodians of indigenous cult and keepers of sacred knowledge. The high priests of Ptah at Memphis are but one example of a powerful priestly group at the centre of a key metropolitan centre. Egypt's priests and their temples could have provided indigenous revolutionaries with a figurehead to rally under; at very least, the inclinations of a local population to revolt or remain peaceful were probably influenced by the priesthoods' attitudes toward the political situation.<sup>127</sup> Thus, royal endowments for temple construction could be seen as intended to both placate and ally publicly with the most influential sector of indigenous society. The construction of temples at key sites along Egypt's borders and at the junctions of trade routes also reflects the role of temple building as a peace-keeping strategy.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> Manning 2012, 62, 98.

<sup>127</sup> See Frankfurter 1998, 66-69.

<sup>128</sup> Discussed in more detail below. See Coppens and Preys 2000, 110; Depauw 2000, 248-49.

The Ptolemies likely also followed a policy of benefaction toward the native temples from economic concerns.<sup>129</sup> By the time of Alexander's invasion, the temples of Egypt had been fundamental to the country's economy for many centuries.<sup>130</sup> Temples controlled massive amounts of land, functioned as repositories of wealth and granaries, and played a central role in the management and organisation of agricultural activity throughout the country.<sup>131</sup> The Nilometers found in major temples including Edfu, Philae, and Kom Ombo<sup>132</sup> indicate that the temple administration was responsible for monitoring the levels of the Nile inundation, so important for the renowned productivity of Egyptian farmland. The temples thus wielded at least symbolic authority over Egypt's agricultural prosperity.<sup>133</sup> Furthermore, as the primary centres of literacy within a largely non-literate population,<sup>134</sup> temple complexes frequently served as the land offices of their respective communities, providing notarial services for the leasing, registration, and transmission of property, and housing regional archives.<sup>135</sup> The visibility of the temples as administrators of a well-ordered and highly productive system no doubt influenced the Ptolemies to adopt a supportive stance toward them in the interests of prosperity and stability.

The considerations by which successive rulers were influenced would have varied. For example, Ptolemy I may have been motivated largely by a quest to establish the legitimacy of his rule, and after proclaiming himself king, of his newly founded dynasty, while Ptolemy IV and the advisers who influenced him may have been concerned primarily with diffusing the civil strife that marked his reign.<sup>136</sup> Variable political and economic considerations were likely supplemented by a persistent sense of religious duty, according to which the Ptolemies would have expected to honour the

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<sup>129</sup> See Finnestad 1998, 232-33.

<sup>130</sup> See Lloyd 2010, 279-89.

<sup>131</sup> Capponi 2005, 133.

<sup>132</sup> Diodorus Siculus 1.36; Strabo 17.1.48; Meyboom 1995, 51-53, 244-45 n. 77-78; McKenzie 2007, 121.

<sup>133</sup> Frankfurter 1998, 43.

<sup>134</sup> See Baines 2007, 49-53.

<sup>135</sup> See Quaegebeur 1979, 716-29; Finnestad 1998, 232; Manning 2003, 147.

<sup>136</sup> See Hölbl 2001, 154.

deities of a country, even when the rites differed significantly from those of Greek tradition, such as in the animal cults of Apis and Mnevis.<sup>137</sup> These incentives are ample reason for royal involvement in the construction and renovation of temples during the Ptolemaic period.

### *Role of the Priestly Elite*

If the rulers provided the primary financing for the sacred building programme of this period, it is necessary to consider what role the indigenous priesthoods played in the creation of the complexes where they served. While it may seem obvious why this group would have wanted to build temples, the complexities of their motivations highlight the significance of the temples for the status of indigenous religious culture.

### Priestly Incentives for Encouraging Temple Construction

Monumental temples were not only the most conspicuous symbols of indigenous religious culture in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt, they were also the centres of the economic and social power wielded by the indigenous priestly elite. The temples not only guaranteed the livelihood of the priests, they also enabled the priests to manage vast amounts of agricultural land and other productive industries, such as quarries and caravan ways. The expansion of the network of temple complexes therefore would have enhanced the status of indigenous religious culture throughout Egypt, both increasing its visibility within the mixed society that was emerging and reinforcing the security of its position under the new administration.

Another reason the priestly elite might have pressed for new temple complexes was the nature of these sanctuaries as hubs of indigenous culture as a whole. Despite the Ptolemies' relatively solicitous approach toward the indigenous population, it is clear that representatives of Hellenic culture held the upper hand in their relations with indigenous Egyptians throughout the country. This pattern is seen, for example, in the widespread establishment of Greek settlers on cleruchic plots of land throughout Egypt by the

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<sup>137</sup> See Thompson 2012, 106-07.

administration<sup>138</sup> and in the foundation of new towns by Greek officials for indigenous inhabitants over whom they had authority. One such interaction is visible in a text recording the allocation of a plot to an Egyptian woman known as Tanuphis daughter of Tpheophis at the foundation of the town of Euergetis circa 132 BCE by a Greek official named Boethes, described as *ktistes*, *syngenes*, *epistrategos*, and *strategos*.<sup>139</sup> In an increasingly mixed society, the temples functioned as bastions of Egyptian culture, in which the indigenous literate minority actively preserved and developed the sacred texts, traditions, and religious customs of their ancestors.

An example of such activity is seen in the Archive of Hor, a cache of texts dating from the second century BCE and found in the sacred animal necropolis of Saqqara.<sup>140</sup> Written by Hor of Sebennytos, a priest of the ibis cult at Saqqara, this archive consists of about sixty texts written in Demotic (a distinctly Egyptian script<sup>141</sup>), with a few in Greek that might demonstrate that Hor was effectively bilingual. Containing historical accounts, dreams and oracles, and details of the cult administration among other topics, the documents demonstrate a concern to put down and engage with information relating to indigenous religious culture and identity in general.<sup>142</sup>

The priesthoods curated temple libraries, including one mentioned in the Great Building Inscription at Edfu<sup>143</sup> and a notable Roman-period example found at Tebtunis.<sup>144</sup> These contained religious and literary texts written in the Egyptian language, Demotic, and Greek. One notable example of indigenous temple library texts is the so-called “Book of the Temple”, a manual describing the layout of the ideal temple, along with the organization and duties of the priests of this temple, that is attested primarily from first-second century CE papyri, mostly from Tebtunis and Soknopaiou Nesos.<sup>145</sup> Indigenous priests transmitted the traditional knowledge in their keeping to the

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<sup>138</sup> Préaux 1939, 463-77; Monson 2012, 77-78; Fischer-Bovet 2014, 208-13.

<sup>139</sup> SB 24.15974; Kramer 1991, 315-39; Mueller 2006, 134-35.

<sup>140</sup> Ray 1976, 117-24.

<sup>141</sup> Ray 1994, 255.

<sup>142</sup> Ray 1976, 124-46.

<sup>143</sup> Translation in Kurth 2004, 65.

<sup>144</sup> Ryholt 2005, 141-70; The Center for the Tebtunis Papyri, <http://tebtunis.berkeley.edu/>.

<sup>145</sup> See Quack 2000, 3-16; 2004, 13-18; 2005, 105, n. 1.

community via temple schools, as seen from certain Roman-period ostraca bearing grammatical exercises,<sup>146</sup> and protected the visual culture of their people by curating and extending the richly decorated and furnished sacred precincts. The flowering of the Egyptian hieroglyphic script and the proliferation of texts and images on temple walls during this period has been viewed controversially as indicative of a collective “fear of forgetting”,<sup>147</sup> as if the designers were motivated by an urgent compulsion to record as much information as possible. If the Egyptian priestly elite saw their temples as safeguards against the dilution and/or eclipse of their ancient heritage, it is obvious that they would have desired the construction and enlargement of sanctuaries throughout their country. Even if not threatened in this way, the priests as Egypt’s educated elite must have promoted the expansion of these complexes as cultural and intellectual centres.

#### Nature of Priestly Involvement

Since the temple texts discussed above attribute the existence of sacred structures to the grace of the ruling Ptolemy, indigenous initiative takes second place in the official record of large-scale projects. Yet it is unlikely that private donations were omitted in favour of royal propaganda. While the indigenous priestly elite had powerful incentives to encourage the Ptolemaic building programme, there is not much evidence that they financed construction of the enormously expensive monumental structures considered here, either on an individual level, or collectively.

That individual holders of priestly titles retained a considerable amount of personal assets during the Ptolemaic period is evidenced by papyri documenting legacies of hundreds of arouras of land and multiple houses being transferred within priestly families.<sup>148</sup> It is also clear that the priests profited individually from the euergetism of the monarchs, as indicated by the statement in the Rosetta Stone that “...moreover, [the king] ordered concerning the priests that they should not pay their tax on becoming priests

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<sup>146</sup> See e.g. Williams 1972; Gallo 1998, xxv-xxviii, cat. nos 34-44; Legras 2004, 179.

<sup>147</sup> Assmann, 1992, 12 n. 15; Finnestad 1998, 197.

<sup>148</sup> E.g. P. BMFA 38.2063b; Manning 2003, 90-92, table 5.

above what they used to pay...<sup>149</sup> Under the Ptolemies, members of the priestly class appear to have been relatively prosperous. It was clearly normal for private persons such as priests to claim to have funded minor projects, including altars, chapels, and shrines, as well as certain temple accoutrements such as musical instruments, lamp stands, doors, and statues.<sup>150</sup> Two notable examples of this are in inscriptions on the statues of two prophets named Panemerit and Pikhaas.<sup>151</sup> They were wealthy local officials who lived in Tanis during the time of Ptolemy XII (c. 80-51 BCE), and are described as having personally initiated the creation of minor sacred buildings.<sup>152</sup> Similar texts on statues, in private tombs such as that of Petosiris, on donation stelae, and inscribed on the gifted items themselves, show that private donors played a role in provisioning sacred spaces and funding some works.<sup>153</sup> However, these donations are almost always very limited in scale and provide no evidence for large-scale funding. It is thus highly unlikely that any significant part of the enormous projects considered here was funded privately.<sup>154</sup>

The other side of this question includes the priesthoods and temples as collective institutions. In previous periods, some priesthoods had enjoyed an extremely high level of prosperity, a notable example being the priesthood of Amun in the late New Kingdom, which was wealthy and powerful enough to challenge the pharaohs.<sup>155</sup> The temples of the Ptolemaic period controlled enormous tracts of agricultural land in addition to many commercial enterprises, including linen and papyrus factories, herds of livestock, and workshops of various artisans, craftsmen, and other trades.<sup>156</sup> Scholars have traditionally assumed that the revenues produced by the cultivation of temple land and by the industries associated with the sacred complexes were the private income of the temples as institutions.<sup>157</sup> That some temple income was not seen as state-derived is indicated by

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<sup>149</sup> Translation in R. S. Simpson 1996, 258-71.

<sup>150</sup> See Shore 1979, Fischer-Bovet 2007, 15-18; Eyre 2010, 120-21.

<sup>151</sup> Cairo JE 67094; Cairo JE 67093.

<sup>152</sup> See Zivie-Coche 2001a, 349-439; Brissaud and Zivie-Coche 2004, 235-89.

<sup>153</sup> See e.g. Lichtheim and Manning 2006, 45-49; Eyre 2010, 120-21.

<sup>154</sup> Minas-Nerpel 2012, 370.

<sup>155</sup> See Sauneron 2000, 174-83; Manning 2003, 71.

<sup>156</sup> See Wallace 1938, 239; Shafer and Arnold 1998, 8-9.

<sup>157</sup> See Monson 2012, 216.

this statement in the Decree of Memphis: "...[the king] renounced the two-thirds share of the fine linen that used to be made in the temples for the Treasury."<sup>158</sup> The linen mentioned here is a temple asset subject to levy by the state but produced independently.<sup>159</sup> The number of times that the rulers exempted certain temples from taxes and other duties strongly suggests that the Ptolemaic state did not discourage the temples from accumulating wealth in their own right.

Due to a lack of detailed evidence, it is not clear exactly how and through what administrative channels building funds were gathered and applied. However, while it seems that the temples possessed considerable resources under the Ptolemies, there is no evidence that they ever funded new complexes and major improvements or rebuildings from independent resources. Despite a significant level of their own income, most of the holdings from which temple revenues were derived were acquired through grants from the state, most significantly of land, described as targeted gifts from the monarchs in the sources reviewed above. Even the temple's private resources remained in their control in part by royal favour, as is shown by the linen tax restored by Ptolemy V.<sup>160</sup> Thus, the sacred building programme under the Ptolemies could hardly have been financed by the temples themselves. However, although the religious institutions, represented by priestly individuals or by collective priesthoods, did not provide the primary funds, it is clear that the indigenous priestly elite were responsible for initiating and informing these projects.

#### Extent of Priestly Non-Financial Involvement

As stated above, the Ptolemies must have patronised the temples of Egypt primarily in order to legitimise their rule; however, they could not have fully understood the cultural implications, proper procedures, and consequent advantages of this if they had not consulted experts in indigenous customs. The story of the Serapis cult, which Plutarch reports was developed by Ptolemy I on the advice of the Egyptian priest

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<sup>158</sup> Translation in R. S. Simpson 1996, 258-71; OGIS 90.17-18, 30; Lloyd 2010, 282.

<sup>159</sup> See Ray 2007, 137.

<sup>160</sup> OGIS 90.17-18, 30; Lloyd 2010, 282.

Manetho,<sup>161</sup> suggests that the royals actively conferred with such people on matters of cultural significance. Similarly, the synodal decrees on the Mendes Stela, Pithom Stela, Rosetta Stone, and Canopus Stelae discussed above demonstrate that the Ptolemies summoned indigenous priests (presumably the most elite of these) to the Hellenistic capital of Alexandria, a location at which there was no reason for them to convene other than to confer with the central administration. I suggest that, during these synods, Egyptian priests as protagonists of indigenous religion actively advised the foreign rulers, encouraging the building and endowment of temples in the indigenous tradition. The rulers, being convinced of the necessity of such projects, allocated funds from the enormous resources under their control for funding sacred building activity and endowments as recorded in the Decree of Memphis, the Edfu Donation Text, and similar documents. The fact that the architecture and inscriptions of the temples remain almost entirely traditional shows that the construction must have been directed by individuals fully versed in Egyptian culture. Thus, although building funds were granted by the state, the priesthoods were responsible for inspiring, planning, and managing the projects, while ascribing the credit to the ruler in keeping with tradition. This makes the indigenous priestly elite the primary guiding force of the Ptolemaic building programme.

#### *Ptolemaic Period Conclusion*

This model of two basic sources of agency accounts for the varying patterns of building activity throughout the Ptolemaic period. It is more probable that individual Ptolemies responded to priestly recommendations in different ways than that the agendas of the priesthoods as a whole would have altered profoundly. This explains the increases and decreases in construction over different reigns as subject to the varying circumstances of successive rulers, but driven overall by the priests' continuous motivation. For example, the continued construction during the tumultuous reign of Ptolemy IV was likely due to priestly agency using funds allocated prior to the outbreak of conflict, while the relatively unproductive years under Ptolemy V, whose reign was

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<sup>161</sup> Plutarch *De Iside et Osiride* 362.

similarly disturbed, could be attributed to the difficulty of resuming these endowments due the unrest. That the state of the country affected the sacred building programme under Ptolemy V adversely is shown by an inscription in the Temple of Edfu which states that “unrest broke out, after unknown rebels in the south had interrupted the work on the throne of the gods (= temple of Horus of Edfu); the uprising raged in the south until the 19th year of the king... Ptolemy V”.<sup>162</sup> On the other hand, the increase of building activity observed during the reigns of Ptolemy VI and VIII, and that of Cleopatra VII could be attributed to the individual ruler’s attempts to stabilize their reign after the unrest that marked that of their predecessor.

The cooperative model of temple funding proposed here offers an explanation of the situation as it existed during the Ptolemaic period. However, the conquest of Egypt by the Romans brought in changes that restructured the relationship between indigenous religious institutions and the state.

### ***Temple Funding in the Roman Period***

As indicated above, temple construction in Egypt continued after the Roman conquest with little initial difference.<sup>163</sup> Building projects begun under the Ptolemies were continued, and Augustus and his successors moved almost seamlessly into the inscriptions previously reserved for the Ptolemies, where they were likewise portrayed as builders and divine intermediaries. Even an initial increase in building at Egypt’s frontiers follows the example of the Ptolemies in using construction to support their regime; the Augustan inscription on the Gate of Kalabsha discussed below demonstrates this clearly.<sup>164</sup> The first Roman emperors thus appear to have adopted the policy of temple building passed down from the Ptolemies. Like their predecessors, the Romans presumably made financial grants to the temples from state funds for new constructions and perhaps in order to endow their cults. However, as time passed the sacred building programme in Egypt slowly lost momentum. The enormous complexes at Philae,

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<sup>162</sup> Cauville and Devauchelle 1984b, 35-36; Hölbl 2001, 154.

<sup>163</sup> See also Minas-Nerpel 2012, 362-78.

<sup>164</sup> Winter 2003, 212.

Dendara, Kom Ombo, and Edfu (c. 100,000, 80,000, 16,000, and 10,000 m<sup>2</sup> in area, respectively)<sup>165</sup> were all begun and substantially completed under the Ptolemies, and nothing approaching this scale was ever initiated again. New constructions under the Romans were much smaller on the whole, and the most significant projects are attributed to the first three emperors, such as the temple of Mandulis at Kalabsha (c. 2500 m<sup>2</sup>) begun under Augustus but never fully finished.<sup>166</sup> Notably, Roman building work continued at strategic sites, including Dakka (less than 2,000 m<sup>2</sup>) and Dendur (less than 900 m<sup>2</sup>) on the Nubian frontier,<sup>167</sup> the oases and the Fayyum,<sup>168</sup> and Coptos at the head of a major road to the Eastern Desert, where a stela from 14-37 CE amongst other inscriptions seems to indicate the involvement of the Egyptian priest Parthenios in the development of the sacred precinct there.<sup>169</sup> Other temples, such as that of Khnum at Esna (surviving area c. 1,500 m<sup>2</sup>),<sup>170</sup> continued to be added to for some time and work also continued at smaller temples, such as the temple of Isis (c. 1,300 m<sup>2</sup>) at Shenhur where decorative work continued until the reign of Trajan (98-117 CE).<sup>171</sup> However, after Trajan little original building occurred, and from the beginning of the second century CE construction on a grand scale was definitively replaced by less significant improvements such as additions to and decoration of existing structures.<sup>172</sup>

This shift from the Ptolemaic period to the Roman shows that something in the funding system must have changed significantly during the first century of Roman rule. Unlike the Ptolemies, the Romans did not inhabit or colonise Egypt to any significant degree, and therefore were not invested in the country in the same way. I argue that the slowing and ultimate cessation of temple building stems from the economic decline of

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<sup>165</sup> Area measurements calculated from measurements derived from the plans in Arnold 1999. These are approximate figures only – in many cases the full extent of the complex is not known, some parts having been fully demolished and/or covered by later construction.

<sup>166</sup> See Bagnall and Rathbone 2004, 246-47.

<sup>167</sup> Gau 1822 n. 55, pls 33-38; Roeder 1913, pls 1-10; Blackman 1911; Bresciani 1975, 1603-64; Aldred 1978.

<sup>168</sup> Kaper 1998, 149 table 5; 2010, 181-82; Arnold 1999, 246, 254, 262.

<sup>169</sup> Coppens and Preys 2000, 110; Depauw 2000, 248-49.

<sup>170</sup> Sauneron 1968, vol. 2, 41-42; 1977, 30-34; McKenzie 2007, 138.

<sup>171</sup> De Meyer and Minas-Nerpel 2012, 1-3.

<sup>172</sup> Bailey 1990, 124.

the indigenous religious institutions and their representatives, probably caused by Roman efforts to reduce their power. This dearth of resources ultimately shut down the programme of temple construction both through lack of funds and through the consequent diminution in the influence of the indigenous priestly elite with the administration.

As in the Ptolemaic period, the primary players in Roman period temple construction are the central state and the elite who represented the temples. Similarly, donations from other sources, including private persons not affiliated with the priesthoods, collective urban associations, and military groups, have been identified and are prominent in models of cult funding as a whole.<sup>173</sup> However, since this chapter focuses upon large-scale projects requiring truly enormous benefactions, I do not address smaller donations.

### *Role of the State*

As under the Ptolemies, the role of the state in financing temple improvements was fundamentally linked with the socio-political situation of Roman times. It was once thought that the Romans changed little in the administration, law, and economy of Egypt, preferring to retain the system of Ptolemies.<sup>174</sup> However, it has been demonstrated that, while the basic bureaucratic structure was not immediately modified, Roman rule brought about a great number of changes to Egyptian affairs,<sup>175</sup> the most significant being the replacement of the Ptolemaic monarchs with a Roman prefect.<sup>176</sup> After conquering Mark Antony, who had been able to use the country as a political and military base, Augustus was wary of Egypt's potential to be turned against him and therefore needed a way to exploit the country's resources while keeping it from being used by an opponent. Augustus and his successors did not personally occupy the country,

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<sup>173</sup> See Zivie-Coche 2001, 349-439; Fischer-Bovet 2014, 321-62.

<sup>174</sup> See e.g. Capponi 2005, 2.

<sup>175</sup> See Whitehorne 1980, 219-26; Bowman and Rathbone 1992, 107-27; Alston 2002, 186-87; Monson 2012, 10-16.

<sup>176</sup> Herklotz 2012, 15.

instead garrisoning it with Roman legions and leaving the prefect as the highest authority there. Yet, the walls of temples decorated during this time show the Roman emperor, not the prefect, in the place of honour previously occupied by the Ptolemies, making it clear that the emperor was the ultimate ruler of Egypt and successor of the pharaohs.

A significant episode with regard to this model is presented by the case of C. Cornelius Gallus, the first prefect of Egypt. Appointed by Augustus after the defeat of Mark Antony and Cleopatra VII in 30 BCE, Gallus acted immediately to crush an indigenous revolt in the Thebaid fuelled by indignation at the taxation imposed by the new regime.<sup>177</sup> In 1896, a trilingual stela was discovered in the temple at Philae recounting the prefect's exploits against the rebels in Greek and Latin.<sup>178</sup> The Egyptian text of the stela, however, does not mention the revolt, but instead describes Gallus as having engaged in building, augmenting, and endowing Egyptian shrines and temples, in formulae similar to those used for the Ptolemies. Although private euergetism was a common activity for Roman officials,<sup>179</sup> Gallus' subsequent fate is telling for the significance of official activity in Egypt. Cassius Dio recounted that instead of being acclaimed for subduing the Egyptian revolutionaries, Gallus was arraigned for insolence and reprehensible actions, foremost of which was that he set up images of himself throughout Egypt and inscribed a list of his accomplishments on the pyramids.<sup>180</sup> For this, the senate voted unanimously that he should be disenfranchised and exiled. Instead Gallus committed suicide.<sup>181</sup>

While Cassius Dio's account may be somewhat embellished, having been written centuries after the events he records, the content of the Egyptian text of Gallus' stela largely corroborates the basic story. This can be interpreted as meaning that the achievements he was accused of commemorating included his financial beneficence to the indigenous temples. The severity with which he was punished indicates that he was

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<sup>177</sup> Strabo 17.1.53.

<sup>178</sup> Cairo CG 9295; Herklotz 2012, 12-18.

<sup>179</sup> Van Minnen 2000, 437-70.

<sup>180</sup> Cassius Dio 53.23.

<sup>181</sup> See Hoffmann et al. 2009, 1-18; Minas-Nerpel and Pfeiffer 2010, 265-98.

primarily found to have usurped a place of honour that was reserved for Augustus. Such propaganda must have been viewed as the exclusive prerogative of the emperor. It thus appears that from the very beginning of their rule in Egypt the Roman emperors—or at least their subordinates charged with administering such concerns—were aware of the importance of being portrayed as divine intermediaries and benefactors, and their refusal to share this distinction indicates that they deliberately meant to maintain this identity.

Augustus, or the imperial agent working on his behalf, was not only aware of the importance of supporting the temples, but also publicised his image in this role. That the Romans initially adopted the Ptolemies' traditional relationship with the temples and executed it with efficiency is demonstrated by the appearance of the cartouches of the emperor Galba, who reigned in Rome for only seven months from 68-69 CE, in the temple of 'Ain Birbiyeh in Egypt's Dakhleh Oasis.<sup>182</sup> The fact that the name of this emperor could be so quickly inscribed by some form of administrative agency in one of Egypt's more remote temples shows that the connection between the emperor and Egypt's traditional temples was both universally recognised and automatically perpetuated.

As a regime of similar foreign origin, the Romans must have involved themselves with temple construction for reasons comparable to the Ptolemies'. Yet, while the Ptolemies established a permanent home in Egypt, the Romans prefects who administered Egypt did so for a finite term of office, making the state of Egypt's affairs less of a personal concern.<sup>183</sup> Furthermore, as the temples became less important and influential, it became less important from an economic point of view for the Roman administrators to focus on the temples. Nevertheless, the Romans must have much preferred a peaceful population to a restive one, and the revolts that occurred under Gallus in 30 BCE emphasised the need for conciliatory measures in the first year of Roman rule. Thus, like the Ptolemies, the Romans would have initially funded the

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<sup>182</sup> Kaper 2010, 186-94.

<sup>183</sup> See Rostovtzeff 1929, 342; Bowman 1996, 66.

building and embellishment of indigenous sanctuaries at least in part in order to placate the influential priesthods and thereby win over the wider indigenous population.

The similarity between Ptolemaic and early Roman concerns is indicated by the emphasis placed on temple building in Nubia under Augustus, including the temple of Mandulis and Isis at Kalabsha,<sup>184</sup> two sanctuaries at Tafa, and others besides.<sup>185</sup> Erich Winter has analyzed the hieroglyphic forms used in Augustus' inscriptions on the Gate of Kalabsha as showing deliberate attempts to imitate the epithets used by the Ptolemies in similar contexts, and consequently to create a sense of unbroken tradition between the reign of Augustus and his predecessors.<sup>186</sup> By building temples at the edges of the country and endowing them with land the Romans would have benefited economically from the cultivation of new agricultural areas and the resulting extra revenue.<sup>187</sup> Furthermore, the location of these constructions in the southern frontier region, where Egypt had long clashed with the Meroitic state in Nubia,<sup>188</sup> suggests that the Romans meant to send a strong message of continuity and uninterrupted power to the peoples outside Egypt's borders, as well as to those living within them.

These southern constructions are paralleled by an increase in some smaller traditional temples in the desert oases within range of Egypt's eastern and western frontiers.<sup>189</sup> Olaf Kaper compares these developments to the "purposeful" building programmes carried out in Lower Nubia, observing this may have been furthermore an attempt to attract settlers to these "fringe" regions, and/or responding to an increase in the population of these areas.<sup>190</sup> Such activity corresponds with the increased attention paid by the Romans to Egypt's quarry sites and commercial trade routes linking the Nile Valley to the oases and the Red Sea.<sup>191</sup> Complementary to local development, such a

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<sup>184</sup> Gau 1822, pls 17-22; Gauthier 1911-1914; Stock and Siegler 1965; Siegler 1970; Wright 1970; Arnold 1975; Henfling 1980, 295-96; Wright 1987; Arnold 2003, 119.

<sup>185</sup> Gau 1822, pls 10-11; Schneider 1979; Raven 1996; Arnold 2003, 237.

<sup>186</sup> Winter 2003, 212.

<sup>187</sup> See e.g. P. Oxy. 3.705; W. Chr. 407; Johnson 1936, 695-96; Coleman-Norton 1951, 223; Monson 2012, 7-8.

<sup>188</sup> See Adams 1977, 163-92;

<sup>189</sup> See Kaper 1998, 149, table 5; Bagnall and Rathbone 2004, 262-67.

<sup>190</sup> Kaper 1998, 139, 146-52; 2010, 181-85.

<sup>191</sup> Bagnall 2005, 196-97; Monson 2012, 15, 17.

strategic move along the borders of the country by the new administration must have been also intended to consolidate, fortify, and legitimise their rule.<sup>192</sup>

This aim is indicated further by the titles adopted for Augustus in official inscriptions throughout Egypt. One of the most widespread of these was “Zeus the Deliverer”, a Greek epithet implying that the conqueror of Egypt had delivered the country from the oppression of the Ptolemies.<sup>193</sup> Similarly, a Greek inscription on the temple of Philae describes Augustus as “saviour and benefactor”.<sup>194</sup> Minas-Nerpel and Pfeiffer observe that in light of the revolts occurring in Upper Egypt at this time such epithets were most likely promoted by the administration, as they demonstrate a desire to be seen as a rightful and benevolent ruler.<sup>195</sup> This interpretation is supported by the similarity between Augustus’ adopted title of *saviour* and the official epithet of *Soter/Saviour* employed by the founder of the Ptolemaic Dynasty, Ptolemy I (306-282 BCE), and reused by at least two of his descendants, Cleopatra III, and Ptolemy IX (144-101 BCE, 116-81 BCE). That Ptolemy I and Augustus, both rulers who initiated a full administrative changeover, adopted the same title suggests that both were concerned with presenting themselves to the population in a positive light. Thus, Roman motivations for involvement in temple construction probably also included a desire to support the legitimacy of their regime by depicting themselves alongside and continuing the actions of previous pharaohs.

If the Romans followed the Ptolemies in this respect, it might be assumed that they likewise funded temple construction in the interests of national prosperity, by supporting and maintaining the institutions that were such a significant part of the economic structure. Yet, although this may have been a motive of the Ptolemies, it is difficult to see it as a concern after the first years of Roman rule, because the administration proceeded to impose drastic changes upon the temples.

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<sup>192</sup> Coppens and Prey 2000, 110;

<sup>193</sup> W.Chr. 111.1-3; Bernand 1969, 80; Minas-Nerpel and Pfeiffer 2010, 283.

<sup>194</sup> OGIS 657; IGP 2.140; Pfeiffer 2012, 88.

<sup>195</sup> Minas-Nerpel and Pfeiffer 2010, 283.

In contrast to the Ptolemies, who encouraged the mingling of Hellenic and Egyptian culture through the settlement of Greek soldiers throughout the countryside, and under whom indigenous individuals occupied posts in the central bureaucracy,<sup>196</sup> the Romans seem to have pursued an agenda of social and ethnic stratification. After taking over, they implemented a targeted policy of land reform, confiscating large tracts of land from indigenous landowners, especially farmers of what had been previously royal land.<sup>197</sup> By contrast, the cleruchies were confirmed as fully private property.<sup>198</sup> Similarly, when the Romans introduced an annual poll-tax, an annual duty to be paid by all males over the age of fourteen, Greek cleruchs, Roman citizens, and inhabitants of the city of Alexandria were exempt, and urban-dwellers elsewhere, most of whom were likely Hellenised, paid it at a decreased rate.<sup>199</sup> Such measures, which diminished the resources of the indigenous population while encouraging the prosperity of Hellenised people, shows that the Romans actively disadvantaged indigenous Egyptians. The contrast between their treatment of the temples and these civil policies shows that while the Romans initially continued funding Egyptian cults and sanctuaries, this must have been for reasons other than promoting the economic prosperity of indigenous religious culture.

#### *Role of the Priestly Elite*

The role played in all of this by the indigenous priesthoods and how it changed under Roman rule is vital to understanding the changing status of indigenous religious culture. Just as Roman motivations for funding sacred structures can be compared with those of the Ptolemies, the incentives that led the indigenous priestly elite to erect and embellish their places of worship during the Roman period must have been much the same as in the Ptolemaic period. The basic situation of the temples as repositories of indigenous culture and religious knowledge under a foreign regime had not changed, and therefore, the desire of the literate Egyptian elite to preserve and promote these places

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<sup>196</sup> Hölbl 2001, 257; Zivie-Coche 2001a, 349-439.

<sup>197</sup> See Rowlandson 1996, 30; Capponi 2005, 98-99.

<sup>198</sup> Bowman and Rathbone 1992, 112.

<sup>199</sup> Wallace 1938, 116-34; Bowman and Rathbone 1992, 112.

was likely undiminished. Yet the institutions' economic and political situation had changed radically.

A successor of Petronius, Gaius Turranius (7-4 BCE), issued the first of a number of rulings that progressively constrained the priestly class.<sup>200</sup> In 4 BCE, Turranius ordered the registration of all hereditary priests, acolytes, and other individuals connected to the temples, along with their children, and commanded them to declare their role in the temple system. Any individuals not of admissible priestly descent were to be immediately removed from the temple.<sup>201</sup> Livia Capponi proposes that Turranius' ruling should be understood as modeled on administrative precedents from the Ptolemaic period.<sup>202</sup> These administrative interventions continued regularly from then on, as seen in a papyrus from 160 CE addressing the right of the priests of a temple dedicated to Ptolemy I at Coptos to elect a novice. The process was overseen by a Roman official named Ulpius Serenianus who cited similar decisions reaching back to 48 CE.<sup>203</sup> These decrees make clear how far the priesthoods and temples had been made subject to Roman authority: the priests were no longer permitted to regulate their own affairs or to manage their own membership in their institutions. The peremptory tenor of these texts indicates that the Roman administration had assumed authority over the priesthoods in a way that the Ptolemies never had.

Similarly, almost immediately after the Roman conquest, the economic prosperity of the indigenous temples began to decline.<sup>204</sup> I mentioned above that the Romans implemented a widespread policy of land confiscation. The papyrological evidence shows that Petronius, the third prefect of Egypt under Augustus in 25-21 BCE, applied this policy to most of the temple domains.<sup>205</sup> Sacred land was appropriated by the state in exchange for a subvention or annual subsidy (*syntaxis*), after which all inhabitants of the sacred land became tenants of the state and were obliged to pay a fixed rent on their

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<sup>200</sup> Monson 2012, 219-20.

<sup>201</sup> BGU 4.1119.

<sup>202</sup> Capponi 2005, 99.

<sup>203</sup> SB 6.9016; Purpura 2007, 312.

<sup>204</sup> Monson 2012, 209, 218-27; Bagnall 2003, 261-68.

<sup>205</sup> Alston 1997, 150; Monson 2012, 219.

holdings. The text below is taken from a petition dated to c. 71/2 CE, in which a group of priests asks the administration to confirm their right to rent a piece of former temple property that has been granted to them in place of a subsidy:

We have had assigned to us from the state instead of a subvention 500 1/4 arouras of grain land at the said village of Tebtunis, which previously belonged to the aforesaid gods, but was reduced to Crown land by Petronius a former prefect, and (ever since leased by us at a rent)... We entreat you therefore to guarantee to us this land which has been reserved to us instead of a subvention by inheritance from our ancestors, and at which we have long worked with our wives and children, thus enabling us to perform the services and ceremonies, so that no one can claim the priestly land, and that we may obtain relief.<sup>206</sup>

This text both documents the appropriation of sacred lands by the state and suggests that those affected by this policy felt themselves disadvantaged. Monson observes that, despite the small size of this temple, the changes noted in this petition would have affected all temples in Egypt, regardless of their size.<sup>207</sup> This document not only shows that the economic status of the indigenous temples of Egypt was being diminished through the seizure of their property, as indicated by the reference to the property of the gods, but also, in mentioning the wives and children of the petitioners, shows that the individual priests affiliated with these temples were being personally affected by these measures.

A serious decline in the prosperity of the Egyptian temples after the first years of Roman rule may be reflected in records of temple staff as early as the first century CE. A papyrus from the Arsinoite nome at this time records that the priests of the crocodile cult at Bacchias have decreased ἀπὸ πλήθους εἰς ὀλίγους – “from many to few”.<sup>208</sup> At roughly the same time, one temple in the Fayyum is reported to have no priests at all, its rites being performed instead by the staff of neighbouring sanctuaries.<sup>209</sup> The decline in numbers of priests mentioned by these documents was probably linked to the decline in

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<sup>206</sup> P. Tebt. 2.302; see also BGU 4.1200; P. Oxy. 4.721; translation from the Advanced Papyrological Information System, <http://www.papyri.info/hgv/13462>.

<sup>207</sup> Monson 2012, 136.

<sup>208</sup> P. Bacch. 24.8-9.

<sup>209</sup> BGU 13.2215.

priestly fortunes and status. If priestly offices had ceased to be lucrative and privileged, fewer individuals would have been willing to take them up.<sup>210</sup>

The Romans initially afforded the priestly class preferential treatment by exempting them from liturgies, the compulsory community service on public works such as dikes and canals required of most other Egyptians. However, it is clear that this privilege too eventually was stripped away.<sup>211</sup> In a papyrus from 54 CE, the prefect L. Lusius Geta is seen responding favourably to a petition to reconfirm the exemption of certain petitioning priests from the liturgy.<sup>212</sup> Yet, rather than showing that priestly prerogatives were being upheld consistently, this document demonstrates that they were being slowly eroded, leading to petitions such as this one. The reality of this erosion is even more obvious in later documents, such as two letters from the first half of the second century CE wherein priests bemoan being compelled to render public service.<sup>213</sup> By 171 CE, the priests no longer protested the imposition of the liturgies, but instead simply complained that they must travel outside of their region in order to fulfill such duties.<sup>214</sup>

Many such rulings are collected in a late second century document known as the *Gnomon of the Idios Logos*,<sup>215</sup> a handbook for the official charged with overseeing such affairs. These rulings further reveal the reality and breadth of Roman control over the priesthood.<sup>216</sup> For example, it was decreed that parents wishing to circumcise a son (an essential rite of initiation for a prospective priest)<sup>217</sup> must make an official application to do so, declaring their genealogy, and confirming the boy's hereditary qualifications to take up priestly office.<sup>218</sup> Furthermore, in addition to the original tax for entrance into the

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<sup>210</sup> Whitehorne 1980, 4; Monson 2012, 211.

<sup>211</sup> Whitehorne 1980, 3-4.

<sup>212</sup> OGIS 664.

<sup>213</sup> BGU 1.176; 5.1210.

<sup>214</sup> P. Bacch. 19.

<sup>215</sup> BGU 5.1210; P. Oxy. 42.3014; Johnson 1936, 711-17; Frankfurter 1998, 198-99.

<sup>216</sup> Alston 2002, 200.

<sup>217</sup> Sauneron 2000, 36-37.

<sup>218</sup> Bowman 1996, 180; Legras 2004, 151.

priestly hierarchy mentioned in the Decree of Memphis, which showed Ptolemy V waiving this fee, a new yearly charge for maintaining priestly status was levied.<sup>219</sup>

This evidence and other indicators thus show that the prosperity and privileged status of the indigenous priestly class gradually declined under Roman rule. The state's increasing encroachment on temple privileges suggests that the priestly elite were no longer able to influence the administration for their own benefit as they had under the Ptolemies.

### *Roman Period Conclusion*

By appropriating sacred property, the Roman administration took control of the vast majority of funds previously at the disposal of the indigenous religious institutions. The state was thus free to redistribute the wealth of Egypt as it saw fit. At first, the administration used these resources as before to continue the construction and augmentation of monumental indigenous temples. Thus, the eventual fall-off of the sacred building programme under Roman rule was not due to an absolute lack of funds. Signs of cultural stability and vitality in the design and texts of the temples demonstrate that the temples did not decline in these areas. Instead, the difference in building activity between the Ptolemaic and Roman periods must have resulted from a change in the system generating this work. If the basic model of temple construction as financed primarily by state-allocated funds remained the same, this change must lie in the attitude of the rulers and administration that approved the distribution of these funds.

The decline of construction work on indigenous temples after the first century CE suggests that the concerns motivating earlier Roman involvement – including the desire to legitimise their rule and gain the good will of the populace – lessened as the new rulers became more secure in their hold over the country. Since there was no reason for the indigenous priestly elite to lose interest in temple construction and maintenance, the fact that sacred building activity nevertheless slowed and came to a halt implies that they had lost much of their influence over the process. This disenfranchisement can be traced to

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<sup>219</sup> P. Tebt. 2.298, W. Chr. 90.107, 108; Monson 2012, 220.

the deprivation of the temple estates and representative priestly class throughout the first two centuries of Roman rule. The diminishment of the economic standing of the priestly elite must have affected adversely their authority in Egyptian society. Combined with the inevitable consequent tensions between this group and the state, the weight of their influence with the administration must have also declined, making them unable to solicit funds from the state to finance temple construction and improvements as in the past. Consequently, the Romans were able to slow the rate at which traditional temples were constructed and embellished and, ultimately, to stop this expenditure when it was no longer politically necessary.

### **Indigenous Temples: Conclusion**

An answer to the question of how temple construction was financed in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt must account for the difference in patterns of construction throughout these periods, the differing agendas of the Ptolemaic and Roman administration, and the changing influence of the priestly elite. It is not known exactly how the priests communicated with the ruling regime, nor how state funds were allocated for specific projects. Baines has suggested the existence of certain “institutions that mediated between local aspirations and central largesse”,<sup>220</sup> but it is not known who might have managed these institutions and how they worked. The funding model suggested in this chapter thus does not fully account for the nuances of the situation. While bearing these gaps in mind, I argue that the circumstances of indigenous temple construction may be summarised as follows.

In both the Ptolemaic and Roman periods, temple construction and/or improvements were financed indirectly by the ruling regime, which granted or confirmed temple endowments for these projects in the form of both directly allocated resources and land under state control. Within this system, the primary difference between the two periods lies in the changing attitude of the administration, which in turn affected the influence of the priestly elite representing the temples. The Ptolemies adopted a long-

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<sup>220</sup> Baines 1997, 230.

term policy of cooperation with the indigenous temples, and contributed actively to their endowment. As a result, the wealthy and powerful priestly class was able to influence the building programme and controlled the funds allocated for that purpose. This system resulted in a pattern of building activity that produced about 120 attested building projects over nearly 300 years, and no doubt many more for which evidence is not available.<sup>221</sup> The variability of this system can be attributed to external pressures and to the different attitudes of successive monarchs, but whose overall constancy was due to the fixed interests of the priestly elite. By contrast, the Romans set about reducing the temples' prosperity by revoking their endowments and increasing their economic obligations, such as taxes, rents, and liturgies. The impoverishment of the priestly class likely resulted in, or at least coincided with, the diminution in their rapport with the state and therefore in their ability to initiate and influence work on sacred structures. This resulted in at least 60 building projects over 200 years; however, these structures were almost entirely secondary initiatives and constructed on a much smaller scale.<sup>222</sup> The lack of funds available to the indigenous temples, combined with the loss of priestly influence with the administration, thus led to the corresponding decrease in sacred building activity.

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<sup>221</sup> See Arnold 1999, 320-23.

<sup>222</sup> See Arnold 1999, 324-25.

### 1.3. CLASSICAL CIVIC BUILDINGS

In considering the significance of monumental construction for the status of indigenous religious culture in the Ptolemaic and Roman periods, the second half of the question involves the classical civic buildings constructed in the Greek and Roman urban centres of Egypt during this time.<sup>223</sup> These structures have been relatively overlooked in the study of Egyptian architecture, but alongside indigenous temples they were some of the most important construction projects in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt. I argue that these buildings were funded by the new Hellenic elite in connection on a certain level with the ruling administration. Thus mirroring the foundational circumstances of indigenous temples built under the Ptolemies and Romans, the details of their construction have significant implications for the status of the religious culture that the temples represented.

#### **Overview of the Evidence**

The primary difficulty of addressing this question is the overall lack of evidence. Due to a relative scarcity of archaeological remains, the picture of Egypt's classical civic buildings is much less clear than that of the indigenous temples. Thus, the chronology of the classical building programme cannot be outlined as neatly. Instead, the surviving physical remains must be considered together with the circumstantial evidence of the papyri in order to form an account of the structures that once composed Egypt's classical cityscapes.

#### *Archaeological Evidence*

Unlike the indigenous temples, which survive in relatively large numbers and often very good condition, classical civic buildings have left only a few traces on the landscape. This is due to many different factors. While most of the Egyptian temples that survive from this time were built in originally remote locations, civic structures were by

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<sup>223</sup> See Alston and Alston 1997, 199-200; Bowman 2000, 179-87.

their very nature located at the heart of urban areas, most of which were long in use and many of which have continued to be inhabited until the present day. As opposed to the mud brick that formed so many of Egypt's smaller buildings<sup>224</sup> and has largely either disintegrated or been recycled into *sebakh*, most of these monumental structures were built of stone. Nevertheless, centuries, and in many cases millennia, of human activity at these sites gave the classical structures little chance of survival. The majority were destroyed either through the recycling of their fabric into other buildings, destruction of the stone in lime kilns, or simply being engulfed in the rising mounds of residential generations. The setting of classical civic buildings in urban centres where human habitation has continued largely uninterrupted poses an additional problem for researchers in that the presence of homes, shops, and other elements of daily life makes it extremely difficult to conduct the surveys necessary to find these structures, and subsequently to excavate them. Nevertheless, some classical ruins have survived in situations allowing them to be identified and studied.

The most extensive of such remains are found at the site of Antinoopolis,<sup>225</sup> a city located on the east bank of the Nile, approximately three hundred kilometres south of modern Cairo.<sup>226</sup> Founded by Hadrian in 130 CE in commemoration of his deceased companion Antinous, Antinoopolis was a brand new settlement, and its builders, unimpeded by preexisting structures, were free to design an entirely Hellenic urban space, as clearly seen from the architectural features which remain *in situ*. The city's most definitive characteristic is its gridded street plan, of which the primary long and transverse thoroughfares can still be made out.<sup>227</sup> These two avenues are framed by the remains of Doric colonnades or stoas, while two tetrastyla, groupings of four monumental columns, mark what were once central intersections. Additional remains include the outlines of a hippodrome (recently mapped in a geophysical survey)<sup>228</sup> with

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<sup>224</sup> Bagnall 1995, 49.

<sup>225</sup> *Description* vol. 4, pls 53-61; Donadoni 1975, 323-25; *Missione* 1974; Arnold 2003, 19; Graham, Heidel, and Strutt 2014, 100-01.

<sup>226</sup> Bailey 1990, 123; McKenzie 2007, 154.

<sup>227</sup> Bagnall 1995, 46.

<sup>228</sup> Graham, Heidel, and Strutt 2014, 107.

starting gates and spina, public bathhouses (a distinctive feature of Hellenistic culture imported to Egypt),<sup>229</sup> a theatre with a monumental gate, and several classical temples.<sup>230</sup> Early archaeological records also document the existence of two triumphal arches that survived until the early nineteenth century.<sup>231</sup>

The amount of archaeological remains found here is paralleled at the neighbouring city of Hermopolis Magna, modern el-Ashmunein, which lies on the west bank of the Nile opposite the site of Antinoopolis.<sup>232</sup> Occupied since pharaonic times, Hermopolis Magna maintained a prominent presence in the region throughout the Ptolemaic and Roman periods as a nome-capital, and apparently, as the largest settlement in the district.<sup>233</sup> Extensive papyrological evidence for civic structures distinguishes this city from every other site in the country; however, like Antinoopolis, the site of Hermopolis retains a number of comparatively well-preserved architectural features from the Ptolemaic and Roman periods. One of the most visually prominent of these is a series of well-preserved columns long interpreted as a Hellenistic agora but later proved to be a later Christian basilica built over a classical temple dedicated to Ptolemy III and his queen Berenice II.<sup>234</sup> This was a significant find, as it is the most extensive example of classical architecture to survive from the Ptolemaic period. The foundations of another prominent building have been identified as a *komasterion*, or procession house, the only example of such that has yet been excavated.<sup>235</sup> Additional classical remains include the colonnaded avenue of Antinoe Street, the Ptolemaic dromos of Hermes, what is possibly an early Ptolemaic bastion or treasury, column drums from a tetrastylon, Antonine

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<sup>229</sup> Broise 2009, 9-15; for a list of all known Greek-style baths in Egypt see Trümper et al. 2013, 308-33.

<sup>230</sup> *Description* vol. 4, 222-28, 242-47, 253-55, vol. 10, 425-27; Bailey 1990, 122-23, fig. 8.3, 124, 128; Bagnall and Rathbone 2004, 170-72; McKenzie 2007, 154-56.

<sup>231</sup> Bailey 1990, 127.

<sup>232</sup> *Description* vol. 4, pls 50-52; Roeder 1931, 82-88; Kamal 1947, 289-95; Roeder 1952, 315-442; Kessler 1977, 1137-47; Spencer, Bailey, and Davies 1982a; 1982b; 1983; 1984; 1985; 1986; Hornung 1974, 33-35; Arnold 2003, 107-08.

<sup>233</sup> Alston and Alston 1997, 204.

<sup>234</sup> Wace 1959, 1; Pensabene 1993, 248-53; McKenzie 2007, 151-52, fig. 75.

<sup>235</sup> Bailey 1984, 29-48.

capitals, a second century CE classical temple, and a water conduit indicating the presence of a *nymphaeum*.<sup>236</sup>

While the best-preserved classical remains in Egypt are found at Hermopolis Magna and Antinoopolis,<sup>237</sup> similar ruins have been discovered in many different locations, although in less abundance and in varying states of repair. Of Alexandria, Egypt's foremost Hellenistic city, only a few ruins remain. These include the Serapeum,<sup>238</sup> the possible remains of the Caesareum,<sup>239</sup> and a hippodrome spina with stone seats. Additional public architecture has been uncovered at the later Alexandrian site known as Kom el-Dikka, including a bath complex, small theatre, lecture halls, and stoa columns.<sup>240</sup>

To the east of Alexandria, extensive surveys and excavations of the city of Pelusium have uncovered a third-fourth century semi-circular theatre,<sup>241</sup> and a classical street grid has been uncovered at Thmuis, a site dated back through the pharaonic period.<sup>242</sup> To the west of Alexandria, the site of Taposiris Magna preserves a Doric temple of Isis,<sup>243</sup> while the remains of Ptolemaic and Roman baths have been excavated at the Delta site of Kom el-Ahmar,<sup>244</sup> and at the site of Canopus east of Alexandria.<sup>245</sup> Further south, at Athribis, the city's classical grid plan is visible, as well as an impressive second century CE public bath complex in which many terracotta figurines were found to the north, a fourth century CE tetrastylon, and colonnaded streets.<sup>246</sup> At Memphis the

<sup>236</sup> Bailey 1990, 124; 1991, 29-33, 37-43, 58; McKenzie 2007, 159-60.

<sup>237</sup> Bagnall and Rathbone 2004, 52.

<sup>238</sup> *Description* vol. 5, pl. 34; Rowe 1946; Roullet 1972, figs 349ff; Arnold 2003, 217-18.

<sup>239</sup> Merriam 1883, 5-35; Sjöqvist 1954, 86-89; Adriani 1966, 64-66, 214-16; Fraser 1972 vol. 2, 68-69 n. 156; Fishwick 1984, 131-34; Hänlein-Schäfer 1985, 10-11, 203-19; Fishwick 1987, 62-72.

<sup>240</sup> Kołataj 1983, 189-94; Bailey 1990, 122, 128; Kołataj 1992; Kiss 1992, 171-78; 2000, 8-33; McKenzie 2003, 35-61; Bagnall and Rathbone 2004, 59, 62, 64; Derda, Markiewicz, and Wipszycka 2007.

<sup>241</sup> Jaritz et al. 1996, 98-153, fig. 31, plan 2; McKenzie 2007, 164; Herbich 2009, fig. 4.

<sup>242</sup> Littman and Silverstein 2007, 1-2; Winter, Westmor, and Bobik 2015, 73-74.

<sup>243</sup> Breccia 1914b, 123-30; Arnold 2003, 239; Vörös 2004, 70-91.

<sup>244</sup> el-Mohsen el-Khashab 1949; Kenawi forthcoming, fig. 182.

<sup>245</sup> Faivre 1918, 11-18; Breccia 1926, 12, pl. 2; McKenzie 2007, 386 n. 155.

<sup>246</sup> Bagnall and Rathbone 2004, 82; Bailey 1990, 127; Alston and Alston 1997, 236; Szymańska 2005, 37-41; el-Sayed and el-Masry 2012, 17-21; Trümper et al. 2013, 309-10.

enclosure wall of the Hellenistic dromos has been excavated,<sup>247</sup> and at Kiman Fares, a site near Arsinoe, the limestone wall of a theatre with an inscription mentioning Ptolemy III (246-221 BCE) has been found, along with the remains of a double-*tholos* bathhouse with mosaic roundel.<sup>248</sup> Continuing up the Nile, column bases, drums, and capitals from large classical buildings have been found at the site of Herakleopolis along with four red granite columns from a second century BCE building.<sup>249</sup>

The Fayyum is particularly well-represented in the archaeological record of this period. At Karanis, one of the physically best preserved sites in the oasis, the remains of more mundane public structures such as granaries and dovecotes are dwarfed by a Hellenistic colonnaded courtyard and a great bath with a Roman-style cupola.<sup>250</sup> Elsewhere in the Fayyum, Tebtunis has yielded Roman dromoi, public dining rooms, and a peristyle courtyard with Ionic columns, while baths have been uncovered at the two sites of Theadelphia and Dionysias, along with two classical Roman structures of unknown purpose at the latter.<sup>251</sup>

Continuing further south, at the famous site of Oxyrhynchus,<sup>252</sup> several colonnaded streets laid out according to a classical grid, an inscribed tetrastylon column, and a large theatre with an estimated capacity of up to 11,200 have been found.<sup>253</sup> Two nymphaea from the second or third century CE survive at Dendara.<sup>254</sup> Finally, near the modern town of Aswan, the sacred island of Philae preserves the earliest surviving classical temple from the Roman period (13-12 BCE) and a triumphal arch of Diocletian

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<sup>247</sup> Petrie 1980-13, vols 15, 17-18, 20, 23, 26; Zivie-Coche 1982, 24-41; Arnold 2003, 147.

<sup>248</sup> Davoli and Ahmed 2006, 85; Bagnall and Rathbone 2004, 153.

<sup>249</sup> Pensabene 1993, fig. 15; Davoli 1998, n. 21; Bagnall and Rathbone 2004, 120, 153, 155; McKenzie 2007, 164.

<sup>250</sup> Bagnall and Rathbone 2004, 131-33; El-Nassery et al. 1976; Gazda 2004, 11-14; Husselman and Peterson 1979.

<sup>251</sup> Gallazzi 1989, 179-91; Bagnall and Rathbone 2004, 141; Bailey 1990, 127.

<sup>252</sup> Grenfell 1896-1897, 6; Petrie 1925, 13, pl. 35.1, 3-5, pl. 39; Turner 1952; Padró et al. 1998, 823-28; 2007, 129-40; McKenzie 2007, 398 n. 68-69.

<sup>253</sup> Petrie 1925, 13, pl. 35.1, 3-5, pl. 39; Turner 1952, 81-83; Krüger 1990, 64, 94-100, 373; McKenzie 2007, 160-61; Bagnall and Rathbone 2004, 159.

<sup>254</sup> Castel, Dumas, and Golvin 1984, n. 64; Bailey 1991, 133 n. 35.

(284-305 CE).<sup>255</sup> Of other known Graeco-Roman cities, such as Naukratis, Soknopaiou Nesos, and Letopolis, no archaeological remains of classical buildings have been identified.

One of the difficulties faced by archaeologists is that most apparently classical ruins found *in situ* are nearly impossible to identify with buildings known from other sources. The size and overall shape of these structures is often the only indication as to their original function, unless intrinsic elements indicating its purpose can be identified, as with the double-*tholos* bathhouses that have been excavated.

Certain classical architectural remains that have not survived to the present day are known to us from images and descriptions from the early days of European exploration in Egypt. The most important of these for this subject is the Napoleonic *Description de l'Égypte*, which records several classical buildings still visible at the time of Napoleon's invasion of Egypt in 1798. This extensive text also documents the appearance of the only two hippodromes found in Egypt, at Alexandria and Antinoopolis respectively, which are now little more than foundational ruins.<sup>256</sup>

Other classical buildings have disappeared after being excavated in the early days of Egyptology, such as the *lychnaption*, or building of the lamplighters, that once stood along the dromos of the Serapeum at Memphis, an indigenous processional way decorated with Greek sculptures and having a compound Hellenic and Egyptian character.<sup>257</sup> The *lychnaption* building was described by Auguste Mariette in 1856, but has since been lost.<sup>258</sup>

### ***Textual Evidence***

In the absence of substantial archaeological evidence, modern knowledge of classical civic buildings in Egypt comes primarily from the papyrus documents that survive in great numbers, and, to a lesser extent, from relevant inscriptions and

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<sup>255</sup> Castel, Daumas, and Golvin 1984; el- Mohsen el-Khasab 1949; Bailey 1990, 127-28, 133.

<sup>256</sup> *Description* vol. 4 1822 pl. 54; 5, 1823 pl. 39; Bailey 1990, 123; Bagnall and Rathbone 2004, 171.

<sup>257</sup> McKenzie 2007, 119.

<sup>258</sup> Mariette 1856, 7-8; Thompson 2012, n. 1, 28-29; McKenzie 2007, 119-20.

contemporary accounts. It is an interesting fact that Antinoopolis, one of the richest archaeological sites for this period, is only represented once in the papyri mentioning public buildings, in a document from 263 CE recording that the city possessed a circular gymnasium.<sup>259</sup> By contrast, classical civic buildings at the neighbouring city of Hermopolis Magna are the best textually-attested in Egypt. The papyri from this site record a first century BCE gymnasium, a *komasterion*, triumphal arch, senate house, library, *prytaneion*, and Hadrianic baths.<sup>260</sup> The most important of these documents are official accounts of the repair and restoration of public buildings, including two lengthy lists that have been linked to damage caused by revolts under the Roman emperor Gallienus (253-268 CE).<sup>261</sup> Structures included in these lists are a porticoed market, an agora, “Sun” and “Moon” gates, several stoas, three tetrastyla including one known as the Great Tetrastylon, and temples of Antinous, Hadrian, Tyche, Serapis, Aphrodite, and Fortune. Other temples named in Hermopolite papyri are those of Isis, Nilus, Apollo, Asklepios, Bastet, the Dioskouri, and the imperial cults, including a Sebasteion and Caesareum. Additional recorded structures include two monumental gates at the ends of the main street, a triumphal arch, a marketplace, and two nymphaea.<sup>262</sup> The repair papyri also suggest where certain buildings were located along the main street, with one specifying, for example, that a tetrastylon was placed at the central intersection and was flanked by the nymphaea.

At Arsinoe in the Fayyum, the papyri indicate the existence of many grand public buildings, including public baths, a *komasterion* used for government auction sales, a gymnasium, and a colonnaded street.<sup>263</sup> In the south, at Herakleopolis, a hippodrome is

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<sup>259</sup> P. Köln. 1.52.

<sup>260</sup> E.g. BGU 8.1767-68; P. Ryl. 2.68.7; McKenzie 2007, 158.

<sup>261</sup> SPP 5.101; SB 10.10299; P. Vindob. Gr. 12565; Drew-Bear 1997, 237-43; Van Minnen 2002, 284-304.

<sup>262</sup> P. Vindob. Gr. 12565 = SB10.10299; Johnson 1951, n. 30, 698-700; Lukaszewicz 1986, 59, 141; Bailey 1990, 124-27, 130, 133-34; Alston 2002, 238-42, 260-62; McKenzie 2007, 158

<sup>263</sup> PSI 6. 584; P. Tebt. 3.2.871; P. Turner 37.270; Bagnall 1995, 47; Bagnall and Rathbone 2004, 153.

reported to have been illuminated by public donations in 45-44 BCE,<sup>264</sup> and an agora is also recorded there.<sup>265</sup>

At Oxyrhynchus, where the largest deposit of Ptolemaic and Roman papyri in Egypt was found, there is more evidence for the existence of classical public buildings than almost anywhere else.<sup>266</sup> Like the accounts that provide so much information about the urban architecture of Hermopolis Magna, the documents at Oxyrhynchus include a large amount of incidental data.<sup>267</sup> Texts recording extant civic structures range from accounts of maintenance operations and restorations on public buildings, such as the extensive index provided by the repair papyrus of 372 CE,<sup>268</sup> to a list from 295 CE of watchmen responsible for guarding city property.<sup>269</sup> From these texts, it is clear that there was in the city a combined theatre and stadium, temples to Serapis, Tyche, Achilles, and Caesar, a tetrastylon, public baths, a theatre, a capitolium, a gymnasium, colossal gates, meeting houses, a Nilometer, a school, a library, a market, stoas, and a running track.<sup>270</sup>

In contrast to this, very little is known about the Fayyum town of Philadelphia, but it is possible to identify the city's Hellenistic street grid from the papyri, as well as the existence of a gymnasium and palaestra.<sup>271</sup> Finally, at Memphis, a papyrus text from 63 BCE records the existence of a hippodrome.<sup>272</sup> For the archaeologically attested sites of Alexandria, Karanis, Dionysias, Tebtunis, Dendara, Theadelphia, and Kom el-Ahmar, no noteworthy papyrological evidence of classical structures has yet been found.

Inscriptions from this period are a source of minimal significance. One referring to a gymnasium is only hesitantly provenanced to Thebes, another records the erection of a four-fronted arch in 373/4 at Athribis, and another mentions that the demos of Arsinoe

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<sup>264</sup> BGU 8.1854

<sup>265</sup> BGU 14.2390; 2376.13

<sup>266</sup> Bagnall and Rathbone 2004, 159.

<sup>267</sup> See Bowman 2007, 173.

<sup>268</sup> P. Bad. 4.74; P. Oxy. 34.2707; P. Oxy. 64.4441.

<sup>269</sup> P. Oxy. 1.43.

<sup>270</sup> P. Oxy 34.2707; Turner 1952, n. 68, 81-83; Lukaszewicz 1986, 185-6; Bailey 1990, 122; Krüger 1990, 94-100; Bowman 1996, 143-48; Bagnall 2006, n. 32, 46; Alston 2002, 262-68; McKenzie 2007, 156, 162-3.

<sup>271</sup> BGU 7. pl. 1; PSI 4.391a; BGU 6.1256; PSI 4.418.

<sup>272</sup> BGU 8.1741

met in the theatre, thereby recording the existence of these buildings.<sup>273</sup> Accounts of Egypt in the works of contemporary authors are a bit more informative. Strabo's description of Alexandria in his *Geography*, written in the first century of Roman rule, is perhaps the most notable of these: he portrays the capital city of Egypt in detail with its main streets, marketplace, theatre and amphitheatre, stadium, palaces, harbour and accompanying buildings, and massive gymnasium.<sup>274</sup> Strabo also mentions a temple to Herakles at Memphis that may have included a gymnasium.<sup>275</sup> Other ancient authors who mention classical public buildings in Egypt include Cassius Dio and Plutarch recording the famous Donations of Alexandria, the former noting that the episode occurred in the place of assembly (*ekklesia*) while the latter specifically names the gymnasium.<sup>276</sup>

### **Funding of Classical Civic Buildings in the Ptolemaic and Roman Periods**

At first it might seem from the difference between the average dimensions of classical structures erected during the Ptolemaic and Roman periods, and the dimensions of the monumental indigenous temples considered above that the construction of the latter required a more substantial outlay of resources than that of their Hellenistic counterparts. One of the largest civic buildings identified from this period, the *komasterion* at Hermopolis Magna, measures 31.5 by 40.66 metres (950 square metres) while the temple of Horus at Edfu, whose scale is not exceptional for its kind, measures approximately 137 by 47 metres (6,439 square metres).<sup>277</sup> However, the surviving evidence indicates that the classical buildings adorning the Hellenistic cities of this period were often erected on an extremely grand scale and included elements that demonstrate lavish expenditure. Extant architectural fragments often display such excellence of craftsmanship that it has been suggested the cities imported internationally

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<sup>273</sup> SB 3.7246.221-80; OGIS 1.49-48; 2.722; Bagnall 1995, 47.

<sup>274</sup> Strabo 17.1.6.

<sup>275</sup> Strabo 17.1.32

<sup>276</sup> Cassius Dio 49.41; Plutarch *Antony* 54.6

<sup>277</sup> See Bard 1999, 320; Alston 2002, 215.

trained sculptors and architects.<sup>278</sup> Meanwhile, existing documents recording extravagant decoration, such as gilded ceilings,<sup>279</sup> suggest that for many of these buildings, little expense was spared in their construction and ornamentation.

Duncan-Jones, writing of building economics in the North African provinces, estimates that, in the second century CE, a temple of medium size would have cost 60-70,000 sesterces, a small porticoed forum 200,000, and a theatre 600,000 or more.<sup>280</sup> Considering that a legionary at the beginning of the second century earned approximately 1,200 sesterces a year,<sup>281</sup> it is clear that such structures represented substantial investments. As large and costly structures used by a sizeable population, the classical civic buildings constructed during this period are comparable to the indigenous monuments in their significance for this question.

A papyrus inscribed with the fiscal accounts of the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus at Arsinoe in 214-215 CE shows that temples of classical deities in the Hellenistic centres of Egypt were administered by the governing body of the city, who directly oversaw their finances. This text also records that the council appointed the temple overseer as a civic official with a limited term and supervised his actions in office.<sup>282</sup> Such a document demonstrates that the classical temples of Egypt were not merely under the control of the city government, but were seen as civic institutions. This system contrasts sharply with that of the indigenous temples, which despite the reality of increasing state intervention, were never treated as administrative divisions of the local bureaucracy. This, along with the fact that classical temples are routinely included in the lists referenced above of other public buildings that the city has repaired or cared for in some way, shows that for the purposes of this chapter classical temples are not a separate category like Egyptian temples but should be considered as part of the wider group of civic buildings.

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<sup>278</sup> E.g. Wace 1959, 8.

<sup>279</sup> P. Köln. 1.52

<sup>280</sup> Duncan-Jones 1990, 177.

<sup>281</sup> Duncan-Jones 1990, 115.

<sup>282</sup> BGU 2.362; Glare 1992, 550-54.

I have argued that the construction of indigenous temples in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt is primarily traceable to two sources: the central state and an upper class of wealthy elites. Even without dedicatory inscriptions and similar attributive evidence, as the primary groups controlling the country's resources, these are the most obvious candidates for sponsoring costly and complex building projects. Likewise, it is necessary to investigate the roles played by these two sources in the funding of classical civic buildings in Egypt. While the timespan and physical context of the indigenous and classical building programmes are largely parallel, the development of Hellenic civic centres during the Ptolemaic and Roman periods adds a new level of complexity to the question of monumental construction. The question consequently involves three possible sources of finance and initiative: the wealthy culturally Hellenic elite, the central state, and the governing body or council of the city wherein the buildings were erected.

### *Role of Private Citizens*

While it is notoriously difficult to differentiate people in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt by either ethnicity or cultural affiliation, the elite class involved in classical building projects should be understood as separate from that which played a role in the construction of traditional Egyptian temples. The construction of these temples was instigated and managed by members of the indigenous priestly class.<sup>283</sup> By contrast, the most elite inhabitants of Egypt's urban centres at this time belonged to an exclusive and privileged Hellenic or Hellenised group known as the gymnasial class.<sup>284</sup> Members of both of these classes were at various times subjected to rigorous screening to confirm the authenticity of their heritage and thus the validity of their membership in their respective classes, a process involving certified declaration of direct descent from long-established priestly and gymnasial families, respectively.<sup>285</sup> The strictness of this requirement could vary, as seen in the Boulé Papyrus (c. 120 BCE), in which a body of Alexandrians who

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<sup>283</sup> Baines 2004, 33-61; Manning 2012, 97; Monson 2012, 211.

<sup>284</sup> See Vandorpe 2012, 263-64.

<sup>285</sup> BGU 5.1210; P. Oxy. 42.3014; M. Chr. 372; Bowman 1996, 180; Alston 1997, 4; 2002, 92; Legras 2004, 151.

hoped to form a city council petitioned the emperor unsuccessfully for permission to restrict access to the gymnasial class more tightly.<sup>286</sup> This shows that gymnasial distinctions might have contained a measure of practical fiction at times.<sup>287</sup> For the purposes of this question, however, it is sufficient to state that indigenous and Hellenistic cultural identities remained largely distinct at the upper level of society, at least between members of the indigenous priestly elite and the Hellenised gymnasial families.

Allan Johnson asserted that public civic buildings in the Roman period were built either by soldiers or imperial grants, maintaining that private citizens and municipalities would not have had sufficient funds to finance such costly endeavours.<sup>288</sup> Yet, the participation of wealthy individuals in the construction of monumental civic buildings is a well-documented phenomenon throughout the classical world. One of the most notable examples of such activity from the Roman Empire is that of Pliny the Younger (61-112 CE), whose detailed record of public benefactions provides a theoretical model for a similar state of affairs in Egypt.<sup>289</sup> During his lifetime, Pliny is known personally to have paid for the construction of a library and bathhouse at Comum (also establishing a fund for the library's maintenance), and a temple of the imperial cult at Tifernum Tiberinum, among other acts of civic generosity.<sup>290</sup> Clear evidence of private munificence supporting urban building projects is also recorded nearer to Egypt in the North African town of Thugga, where an abundance of inscriptions dating from the reign of Tiberius to that of Diocletian credit wealthy locals with paying for the construction of monumental city buildings in full.<sup>291</sup>

While direct evidence for civic construction supported by private benefaction within Egypt is sparse, several philanthropic donations given to municipalities by their wealthy residents are known.<sup>292</sup> One example of such activity is that of Aurelius Horion,

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<sup>286</sup> PSI 10.1160; Capponi 2005, 65.

<sup>287</sup> Bagnall 1995, 100 n. 359.

<sup>288</sup> Johnson 1936, 636.

<sup>289</sup> Pliny the Younger 1.8; 4.1.

<sup>290</sup> See Duncan-Jones 1982, 27-31.

<sup>291</sup> AE 1969-70, 648-52; CIL 8.26467.1, 82, 93, 98, 527, 49-50; Duncan-Jones 1990, 179-81.

<sup>292</sup> See Van Minnen 2000, 437-70.

a wealthy landowner who lived at Oxyrhynchus during the late second and early third centuries CE. Two papyrus documents of 202 CE show him asking for permission to make certain charitable donations, firstly endowing athletic contests in his city with cash prizes,<sup>293</sup> and secondly bestowing monetary grants upon certain small villages at the brink of economic ruin in the Oxyrhynchite nome.<sup>294</sup> Lukaszewicz and Bowman see evidence for civilian generosity in texts recording the bequest to the public of certain properties that were originally private, such as the baths of Arrius Apolinarius at Oxyrhynchus.<sup>295</sup> A specific example of private initiative providing funds for classical public buildings can be seen in a second century CE inscription from the Menelaite nome in Upper Egypt, in which a freedman, who claims to have built a shrine to Aphrodite and supplied it with shops for its support, requests permission to further endow the shrine with a brewery.<sup>296</sup>

One last example of what appears to be a voluntary private benefaction to the community comes from Hermopolis from 15 CE in the form of a service contract between a man called Dius and two workmen, who pledge to heat the baths of the gymnasium in return for a specified monetary amount. Johnson interprets this document as a record of Dius' liturgical obligations as a gymnasiarch of the city.<sup>297</sup> However, the text plainly describes him as a μελλογυμνασιάρχος, that is, a gymnasiarch-elect/designate, making it hard to assume that his involvement in this contract is a part of his future position. Such a conclusion is further contradicted by the wording of the text: παρὰ τοῦ Δείου διὰ τῆς Ἑρμονίου ἰδιωτικῆς τραπέζης δραχμὰς φ<sup>298</sup> – “five hundred drachmas from Dius through the *private* bank of Hieronicus.”<sup>299</sup> The text goes on to stipulate that the contracted labourers will additionally make deliveries of chaff to Dius' personal brickyards: τῷ Δείῳ τῷ αὐτῷ – “for Dius himself”. The mention of a private

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<sup>293</sup> P. Oxy. 4.705.

<sup>294</sup> W. Chr. 407.

<sup>295</sup> P. Oxy. 44.3173; Lukaszewicz 1986, 30; Bowman and Rathbone 1992, 497.

<sup>296</sup> ArchivBeih. 2.565.

<sup>297</sup> Johnson 1936, 683.

<sup>298</sup> P. Lond. 3.1166

<sup>299</sup> Italics mine.

bank, presumably referring to a personal rather than municipal account, and the inclusion of service to personal property in addition to the public baths seems to imply that Dius' involvement in this contract is of an individually philanthropic nature.

If private persons played a role in the financial endowment of classical civic construction projects, their motivations must be considered. As noted above, many public buildings from this time must have been highly expensive to erect due to the scale of the structures, the skilled craftsmanship apparent in their ornamentation, and the luxury materials that adorned them. Therefore, even wealthy members of the upper class must have been heavily persuaded before deciding to sponsor such enterprises. Perhaps the most obvious incentive is the desire to earn public acclaim through well-advertised acts of philanthropy. Using public munificence to enhance a donor's popular image was so characteristic of such undertakings that Pliny the Younger references the idea with regard to his own benefactions. Instead of making anonymous charitable donations, Pliny openly acknowledged his gifts to the public, hosting a banquet and giving a speech at the dedication of the Comum library. Yet after the event, Pliny expressed his misgivings about such displays in a letter to his friend Pompeius Saturninus, maintaining that their inherent egocentricity threatened to subvert his own altruistic intentions.<sup>300</sup>

Pliny's reported attack of conscience suggests that wealthy individuals might have gifted communities with costly buildings out of genuine philanthropy and/or piety, particularly when involving temples of classical deities and the imperial cult.<sup>301</sup> Such impulses may have also been connected with a sense of civic pride and fealty, or from a desire to give a town the aspect of a great city.<sup>302</sup> These motivations show the many possible dimensions of personal euergetic activity.

### ***Role of Municipalities***

While the examples of individual generosity cited above could indicate a wider trend of private involvement in civic construction, the surviving evidence implies that

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<sup>300</sup> Pliny the Younger 1.8.

<sup>301</sup> BGU 2.362, Glare 1992, 551-53.

<sup>302</sup> Bagnall 1995, 47.

most wealthy citizens who became involved in the funding of public monuments in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt did so as components of municipal governing bodies.<sup>303</sup> In this system, private initiatives and motivations were merged into a collective agenda. The bulk of the evidence for this consists of papyrus documents recording contracts for labour and materials, receipts of service, and accounts of operational supplies, all of which name the city and its representative magistrates as the soliciting party, instead of private individuals. The following text is a typical example of such documents:

To the excellent senate of the great, ancient, illustrious, and most august city of Hermopolis through Aurelius Corellius Alexander, cavalryman from the army and whatever else he is styled, prytanis in office, from Aurelius Achilles also called ----, senator in the same city. Being chosen by the excellent senate for the purchase and conveyance of building lumber from the construction of public----- in the city, I request an appropriation from the city treasury for the purchase and conveyance of the lumber to the amount of two talents three thousand drachmas in the new silver coinage. Of this I shall file an account in the state treasury with the proper officials. The rights of the senate and city shall be protected in accordance with the official commission. The above senator, Aurelius Achilles, makes this request.<sup>304</sup>

Dating to 266 CE, and corresponding with a third century boom in public works in Egypt,<sup>305</sup> this text records the delegation of an individual civil officer by the city senate to oversee public works in the name of the city, and to finance them from city funds. Far from being granted free discretionary reign, the senator appointed to the project seems to have been held closely accountable for his actions in this capacity, further emphasising the role of the city as the primary agent in civic construction projects.

In other texts, the preeminence of the city's role in public works is shown even more clearly. In 263 CE, as part of an extensive programme of repairs, the council of Antinoopolis apparently invited bids for the gilding of the ceiling portico and entrances of the city's gymnasium. Both of the successful bids – for half of the work respectively – survive, of which the better preserved reads as follows:

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<sup>303</sup> See Van Minnen 2000, 453-70.

<sup>304</sup> C. P. Herm. 83; Johnson 1936, 698.

<sup>305</sup> Jouguet 1911, 455-56; Johnson 1950, 158; Lukaszewicz 1986, 143.

To the most excellent council of the illustrious Neo-Greek city of Antinoopolis from Aurelius Hermias...and from Aurelius Demetrius...We offer of our own free will to undertake the gilding of half of the wood carving that is being done for the roof of the portico and the entrances of the circular gymnasium that is being constructed auspiciously...We understand that we are paid the full amount for whatever job we finish until the project is done....If you please, accept us on these conditions.<sup>306</sup>

Both this text and that considered above plainly demonstrate that the city was the ultimate initiator and funder of the building projects at hand; yet, the latter document reveals even more clearly that the governing body of the city was seen as the primary agent of construction. Unlike the former example, in which a named magistrate arbitrates the contractual legalities as the city's representative, this text shows the workmen entering into a business deal with the city council itself – the two men address the council directly and as a body, and expect a unified response from it in return.

Comparable texts, particularly from Hermopolis and Oxyrhynchus during the third century CE, show both the involvement of deputised officials in municipal undertakings and direct dealings between service providers and the city.<sup>307</sup> As primary sources of information regarding the existence of classical civic buildings in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt, the papyri considered above clearly show the preeminence of the city's role in these projects.

If the municipality was the prime mover of urban development, the method by which it initiated civic projects must be examined. The textual evidence indicates that the decision to construct a public building, as well as the necessary allocation of funds, was accomplished by a simple vote of the governing body upon propositions introduced by its members. A papyrus dated to 103 CE and most likely from Arsinoe records one such process.

Minicius Italus to Diogenes, Dionysius, and Apollonius, strategi of the Arsinoite nome, greeting. Clasticus, the excellent procurator of our Lord, has communicated to us that the record office in the nome is unsuitable, and that the records deposited therein are being destroyed while the majority of them cannot be found. He says that he picked out in your

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<sup>306</sup> P. Köln 1.52; Bagnall and Rathbone 2004, 171.

<sup>307</sup> E.g. P. Oxy. 4.754; W. Chr. 194-95; P. Oxy. 1.196; Johnson 1936, 692-704.

presence a suitable site for rebuilding, and that 3282 drachmas and three obols were voted for the work.<sup>308</sup>

It seems clear from texts such as that cited above that the considerable funds required for these projects were directly dispensed from the governing body through a vote of its members.<sup>309</sup>

It must next be determined where these funds came from. One obvious source would be the fines, rents, and taxes established and collected by the local municipality (rather than by the state). The role of taxation as a source of city funds is implied by the large number of documents recording the imposition of taxes by the city upon private citizens. Such levies include taxes on market administration (a form of sales tax), the filing of documents in civic archives, the registration of official documents, and the practicing of specific trades, to name a few.<sup>310</sup> Notably differing from state taxes such as the poll-tax, which was imposed by the central state, these tolls seem to have been exacted by the cities themselves.

While little is known about the exact nature of local taxation in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt,<sup>311</sup> that the cities received such fees directly is indicated by documents recording that certain amounts were paid directly to the city.<sup>312</sup> The city also derived a monetary income from the rental of property in its control. Of the papyri that illustrate this fact, one is excerpted below.

To Aurelius Dioscurides also called Sabinus, ex-gymnasiarch, prytanis in office of the city of Oxyrhynchus, director also of municipal finance, from Aurelius Horion son of Colluthus and Tereus, of Oxyrhynchus. I voluntarily engage to lease the workshop below the east colonnade in the city Capitol, with a view to opening a tavern, for one year from the first day of the next month Mechir of the present first year at a monthly rent of eight drachmae.<sup>313</sup>

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<sup>308</sup> SB 7378; Johnson 1936, 368.

<sup>309</sup> See P. Oxy. 4.754.

<sup>310</sup> See e.g. P. Bour. 13; P. Ryl. 2.120; P. Oxy. 12.1473; 9.1200; O. Wilck. 680; 1332; Alston 2002, 193; SB 16.12695; Rea 1982, 191-209.

<sup>311</sup> Alston 2002, 342.

<sup>312</sup> See e.g. P. Oxy. 12.1473.

<sup>313</sup> P. Oxy. 17.2109.

Dating from 261 CE at Oxyrhynchus, this document contains a direct communication between a man who appears to be a private citizen, and another identified as ἑναρχος πρύτανις τῆς Ὀξυρυγχιτῶν πόλεως, διέπων καὶ τὰ πολιτικά – “prytanis in office of the city of Oxyrhynchus, director also of municipal finance”. This text plainly shows the city acquiring revenue from the leasing of property, the immediacy of the city’s role in its economic dealings, and the direct transfer of cash from private citizens to the municipality. The resultant revenue subsequently seems to have been retained locally for civic use, and constituted a portion of the city’s income. This is attested by a document from Hermopolis Magna c. 250 CE that reads: “The city market is not only an excellent ornament of our city but it also affords no small revenue and benefits from those leasing....<sup>314</sup>

While the sources mentioned above do not state definitively that these funds were applied to civic construction, that income derived from levies on individual citizens was applied to public building projects is seen clearly in a papyrus dating to 107 CE. This records a statement delivered by the strategus of the Hermopolite nome before the prefect concerning the construction of public works in the city.

A report was read concerning expenditure on the baths which were being refitted and on the street, amounting to sixteen talents, and Heraclides, strategus, stated that further expenses had been incurred meanwhile. Vibius Maximus: - ‘Fifty talents were awarded to the city from Theon, and twenty, I think, besides from the property of the woman gymnasiarch; let the money be recovered from the funds assigned to the city.’<sup>315</sup>

This document seems to describe the funds προσεκρίθη τῇ πόλει – “awarded to the city” – from both Theon and the gymnasiarch as involuntary donations, thus implying that the money was appropriated as penalisation for unspecified offences. It is clear at least that the money derived from these two individuals was allocated to offset the cost of restoring the public baths and street. A simple reading of these documents thus shows the city constructing civic structures as a singular entity disposing of a collective income derived from external sources. The reality of the situation was more complex.

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<sup>314</sup> W. Chr. 296.

<sup>315</sup> P. Amh. 2.64; Johnson 1936, 684-85.

While the governing body of a city functioned ideally as a cohesive body, it was actually a collective organisation of wealthy individuals who constituted the elite of their respective urban centres. That personal affluence was an essential prerequisite for nomination to public office is shown by surviving documents which record the barring of certain candidates from election due to an insufficient net worth,<sup>316</sup> and persons outside of the moneyed gymnasial group were only ever found holding public office under exceptional circumstances.<sup>317</sup> This composite nature provided the most considerable source of funding available to the governing body of cities for civic expenses, the most significant of which were the construction and maintenance of public structures and monuments.

This income was derived from members of the governing body in two separate, yet related, ways. The first and most established of the obligatory expenditures imposed upon officials was a fee known as the *summa honoraria* in Latin or more broadly as the *λειτουργία*/liturgy in Greek. In the narrower sense of the Latin term, this was an entrance fee levied upon newly elected officials before they could join the governing body. Known to have existed widely throughout the Greek and Roman world,<sup>318</sup> the imposition of this fee in Egypt is well-attested in the papyri. An excerpt of such a text dating to 192 CE from Hermopolis Magna reads as follows:

If then Achilles wishes to be crowned as exegetes, let him pay the entrance deposit for the lower office.... Achilles said: 'I offered to undertake the office of exegetes on the condition that I contribute two talents annually; for I am not able to support the office of cosmetes.'<sup>319</sup>

This document is interesting in that it not only records the exaction of an entrance deposit – here referred to as τὸ εἰσιτήριον – but also confirms the required amount as two talents per year. It also implies that election to a different office, that of the cosmetes, would have been even more expensive. If one talent was the equivalent of 6,000

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<sup>316</sup> E.g. P. Oxy. 12.1415.

<sup>317</sup> P. Lond. 2565; Pestman 1985, 68-69.

<sup>318</sup> See Duncan-Jones 1982, 82-88.

<sup>319</sup> P. Ryl. 2.77

sesterces,<sup>320</sup> the exegetes was obligated to pay 12,000 sesterces a year, which, in comparison to the annual pay of approximately 1,200 sesterces earned by a legionary around the same time,<sup>321</sup> was a very large sum. Duncan-Jones approximates that on average, a city's yearly revenue from entrance fees would have totaled 35,000 sesterces altogether, thereby estimating that a city might have been able to accomplish the construction of a full set of public buildings within 120-140 years.<sup>322</sup> The date of the document cited above offers proof that city governing bodies were deriving income from the entrance fees imposed upon their members before 201 CE, when Septimius Severus granted Egyptian cities the right to officially organise municipal councils.<sup>323</sup> This shows the difficulty of analyzing the chronology of building finances through the lens of administrative developments.

That entrance fees were used for the construction of public buildings is suggested by evidence for this practice elsewhere in the Roman world. For example, in a letter to Trajan, Pliny reports that the inhabitants of Claudiopolis were building new public baths, stating that “the funds appropriated for the carrying on of this work arises from the money which those honorary members you were pleased to add to the senate paid (or, at least, are ready to pay whenever I call upon them) for their admission”.<sup>324</sup> Likewise, an inscription from Lanuvium during the time of Septimius Severus records a renovation of the public baths from the entrance fees that the emperor had recently allowed the governing body to extend to holders of urban priesthoods.<sup>325</sup> Both of these documents seem to imply that the governing bodies of Claudiopolis and Lanuvium asked permission to add more fee-eligible members to their ranks for the purpose of raising additional building funds. Thus, not only do these texts confirm that the use of the *summa honoraria* to pay for public buildings was a well-known practice in the Roman world,

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<sup>320</sup> Corbier 2005, 338.

<sup>321</sup> See Duncan-Jones 1990, 115

<sup>322</sup> Duncan-Jones 1985, 29.

<sup>323</sup> Johnson 1936, 613.

<sup>324</sup> Pliny the Younger 10.48.

<sup>325</sup> ILS 5686.

they also suggest that this was one of the most significant sources of such expenditures.<sup>326</sup>

Governing body members also contributed to the revenue of the city by fulfilling financial obligations commonly known as liturgies. While this term is sometimes used to refer to the entrance fee, its meaning is broader, and, for the sake of clarity, it is used here as distinct from the more limited definition of *summa honoraria*, which was only the first instalment of the financial commitment entailed in a municipal appointment. Civic officials were not only required to pay a certain sum when they took up a city seat,<sup>327</sup> they were also frequently obligated to contribute funds from their own purse to public expenses. The evidence implies that such outlay was a typical aspect of public office. According to surviving documents, city officials were personally financially responsible for providing heat and oil for the city baths, paying for public entertainment, and maintaining the water supply.<sup>328</sup> That these obligations required significant sums is attested by a papyrus recording the reduction of these charges upon gymnasiarchs in the early second century CE.<sup>329</sup> It is less clear whether magistrates were obliged to pay for the erection and restoration of public buildings directly from their own purse in this way. In some cases it seems that they expected remuneration for such work from the city treasury.

To the excellent senate of the great, ancient, most illustrious, and most august city of Hermopolis through Aurelius Corellius, cavalryman from the army, former eutherniarch, gymnasiarch, senator, presiding prytanis of the same city, from Aurelius Hermaeus also called Demetrius, senator of the same city, superintendent of the paving of the stoas in the gymnasium and the purchase of stone. I request an appropriation for past and present expenditures incurred in this work of five talents 3200 drachmas in silver of the new currency.<sup>330</sup>

This third-century CE document implies that officials were not necessarily forced to meet the costs of public construction on their own, but could collect funds for that

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<sup>326</sup> Duncan-Jones 1982, 86.

<sup>327</sup> See e.g. P. Oxy. 44.3175.

<sup>328</sup> OGIS 2.713, P. Lond. 3.1177, Van Minnen 2000, 455, 460.

<sup>329</sup> P. Amh. 70.

<sup>330</sup> W. Chr. 194.

purpose from the city treasury. It also suggests, by mentioning ἀναλώματα...ἀλλὰ καὶ νῦν – expenditures past and present – that officials chosen to oversee such projects were expected to pay any costs incurred upfront, and subsequently petition the city for reimbursement. Their involvement in public building therefore must have involved at least some personal financial risk, and could have been extremely costly if their petition was even partially unsuccessful.

Despite the enormous expenditure entailed upon public service, it appears from evidence of other cities throughout the Greek and Roman world that liturgies, including entrance fees, were not always regarded as undesirable financial obligations. In the Roman province of Africa Proconsularis in the second century CE, magistrates are recorded actually paying more than the required amount of *summa honoraria*, in order to fund public building and thereby display their generosity.<sup>331</sup> In such cases, the line between private benefaction and civic instigation becomes especially blurred.

The evidence shows that in Egypt liturgies did eventually become a burden that people frequently went to great lengths to avoid. The undesirability of this service is demonstrated by the granting of immunity from liturgies as a favour to certain groups.<sup>332</sup> Even more telling are the texts that show people nominated to a civic post relinquishing their own property in order to make themselves ineligible for the office, a practice known as *cessio bonorum*.<sup>333</sup> In these circumstances, the funding of expensive public buildings is farther removed from private individuals and instead is more closely linked to the collective agency of the governing bodies.

The governing bodies of cities were composed almost exclusively of wealthy citizens who delegated specific persons from their number to oversee particular projects, and derived the greatest part of their income directly from the personal assets of their members, by both levying a heavy entrance fee and obligating officials to spend their own money on public enterprises. It is next necessary to consider the factors that prompted municipalities to engage in urban development.

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<sup>331</sup> IRT 117; I. L. Alg. 1.876; Duncan-Jones 1982, 86, 106-07.

<sup>332</sup> See W. Chr. 28; BGU 180.

<sup>333</sup> See W. Chr. 402.

As stated above, individual munificence could stem from various motivating factors, including the desire for personal acclaim, genuine piety, and the inclination to further city interests. Since no surviving proclamations recount publicly which council members initiated which monuments, municipal bodies may not have undertaken public projects from a desire for individual recognition. However, they must have wanted to please and receive the approval of their communities. Although no evidence records public opinion on this matter or indicates that civic officers were pressured by the public to erect civic buildings, a city's inhabitants must have welcomed the construction of new facilities for their use, and the city officials would have known this.

Secondly, municipal bodies may have engaged in urban development through an honest sense of duty and piety. The erection of civic temples to classical deities and the imperial cult in particular must have been seen as a propitious activity,<sup>334</sup> while the resulting divine good fortune and imperial goodwill affected the governing elite as well as the lower classes. Likewise, the provisioning of the city with necessary amenities such as baths, marketplaces, and stoas was probably viewed as the rightful responsibility of a good and ethical government, while the establishment of theatres, circuses, and especially gymnasia would have obviously benefited the upper class as well as the masses.

Finally, the construction of civic buildings could have been instigated by a sense of civic pride, and the corresponding desire to make one's community grander and more beautiful. This can be seen especially in ornamental architectural projects such as tetrastyla and monumental arches. That such a consideration could be a driving force behind urban development in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt is observable in the second century CE, when the founding of Antinoopolis by Hadrian as a grand Hellenistic polis instigated what Bagnall and Rathbone describe as a "short-lived building boom" throughout the country, as other municipalities eagerly attempted to emulate the magnificent architecture of the newly established city.<sup>335</sup>

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<sup>334</sup> BGU 2.362; Glare 1992, 551-53.

<sup>335</sup> Bagnall and Rathbone 2004, 169.

It is clear from the available evidence, both archaeological and papyrological, that the primary agent in the construction of classical civic buildings in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt was the governing body of the city itself, which was composed of the Hellenised urban elite. The role of central state in this activity must now be considered.

### ***Role of the Central State***

Similar to indigenous monuments, whose inscriptions credit the current ruler with their construction, several texts and eponymous appellations attribute classical buildings in Egypt to the agency of the current ruler. Examples include baths named after Hadrian, Trajan, and the Antonines, respectively<sup>336</sup>, and contemporary accounts such as Dio's statement that "Hadrian restored the monument of Pompey which had fallen into ruin. He also rebuilt the city named henceforth for Antinous".<sup>337</sup> However, as seen with the Egyptian temples, such ascriptions do not reflect the true nature of these structures' funding. The central state occasionally granted financial endowments to Egyptian cities that were then administered by the municipality, but these appear to have largely been of a humanitarian nature,<sup>338</sup> and there is no direct evidence for construction being directly paid for by the state. It has already been shown that cities were primarily responsible for their own building programmes; but the central state also played a certain role.

External evidence shows that cities elsewhere in the Roman Empire were required to seek state approval before commencing their building projects. In a letter to the Emperor Trajan, Pliny writes of the inhabitants of the city of Prusa in Bithynia,

The Prusenses, Sir, having an ancient bath which lies in a ruinous state, desire your leave to repair it; but, upon examination, I am of opinion it ought to be rebuilt. I think, therefore, you may indulge them in this request, as there will be a sufficient fund for that purpose, partly from those debts which are due from private persons to the public which I am now collecting in; and partly from what they raise among themselves towards furnishing the bath with oil, which they are willing to apply to the carrying on of this building.<sup>339</sup>

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<sup>336</sup> P. Giss. 50; P. Oxy. 53-54, 896; CPH. 66, 82

<sup>337</sup> Cassius Dio 69.11.

<sup>338</sup> P. Lond. 5.1905; Bell 1933, 518.

<sup>339</sup> Pliny the Younger 10.34.

The text indicates that state endorsement was required for this project. By outlining the various sources of revenue with which the city planned to finance the bath, it is also clear that the imperial treasury intended to contribute nothing to the building fund. That this was likewise the case in Egypt is demonstrated by a letter sent from the prefect to the city of Oxyrhynchus circa 128 CE granting permission to fit out the baths from funds which the city itself had gathered.

I congratulate you on your design to beautify your city and I permit you to equip the bath from the funds already collected as you assert, and from those which may be contributed by-----and from contributions that may be made in the future by any person who is anxious to gain a reputation for generosity.<sup>340</sup>

A further aspect of the state's role in civic construction was its ability to prevent cities from augmenting their own funds by increasing their sources of revenue. This can be seen in Trajan's reply to Pliny's letter:

If the erecting of a public bath will not be too great a charge upon the Prusenses, we may comply with their request; provided, however, that no new tax be levied for this purpose, nor any of those taken off which are appropriated to necessary services.<sup>341</sup>

In this way the state was able to exercise partial control over the extent to which cities could build. This must have been a means of self-protection to a certain extent. By preventing cities from potentially bankrupting themselves in the pursuit of metropolitan grandeur, the state insured itself against the loss of revenue from those localities, either from unpaid taxes such as the poll-tax that it received from the citizens or from a depressed economy in general. That the loss of local revenue was in the minds of state officials is implied by a letter from 202 CE, in which a private person attempts to use this anxiety to solicit hardship funds for distressed cities. Aurelius Horion asks permission from Septimius Severus and Caracalla to make benefactions to Oxyrhynchus and other villages in the nome where his family held property, attempting to convince the emperors

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<sup>340</sup> P. Oxy. 43.3088; Bowman 1996, 495; Bowman and Rathbone 1992, 123-24; Alston 2002, 154-57; McKenzie 2007, 162.

<sup>341</sup> Pliny the Younger 10.35.

by asserting that, if no intervention was made, the villages would be “lost to the fisc”, and the emperors’ fields would be left uncultivated.<sup>342</sup>

Finally, the central state played a role in the erection of public buildings by both directly and indirectly encouraging cities and individuals alike to undertake such projects with their own resources. Evidence for this sort of instigation outside Egypt is seen in the letters of Pliny who attributed his many benefactions to the instigation of Nerva.<sup>343</sup> Egyptian sources reveal a similar attitude, like the papyrus considered above that describes the Roman prefect endorsing the Oxyrhynchites petition with the word ἀποδέχομαι, indicating that he very much approved of their efforts.<sup>344</sup> The commendation of the prefect clearly shows that the central government in the second century CE was actively advocating the construction of monumental civic buildings in the urban centres of Roman Egypt.

### **Classical Civic Buildings Conclusion**

Although the question of how the construction of classical public buildings was funded is complex, it can be answered from the available evidence. From both archaeological and textual sources, it is clear that the classical civic buildings of Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt were primarily financed by municipal funds. While these funds could be derived from several different revenues, including local taxation, fines, and the leasing of property, the most important single source was the personal fortunes of the elite individuals who held public offices. These wealthy persons contributed to the city’s income first through the payment of a considerable fee upon joining the governing body, and subsequently financing public expenses from their own purses. City funds were allocated for the construction and restoration of classical-style public facilities by means of a collective council vote, and individual magistrates were often appointed to oversee the project. These had recourse to public funds to pay for the undertaking for which they were responsible; however, they could be expected to offer their own funds

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<sup>342</sup> P. Oxy. 3.705; W. Chr. 407; Johnson 1936, 695-96; Coleman-Norton 1951, 223.

<sup>343</sup> Duncan-Jones 1982, 27.

<sup>344</sup> P. Oxy. 43.3088; Bowman 1992, 495.

for the work in advance. This level of personal financial involvement in urban development recalls the concept of private individuals donating funds to public works. However, while instances of personal euergetism are attested, the low frequency of such accounts in comparison with records of municipal agency suggests that private donations were not the typical source of building funds. While the central state did not contribute financially to these projects, it obviously had an interest in the erection of civic buildings. By requiring cities to seek approval before commencing any planned projects, the state was able to prevent cities from increasing their building budgets inappropriately. Nevertheless, the enthusiasm of recorded responses implies that it actively encouraged civic development.

Therefore, despite the involvement of both the central state and private individuals, I argue that primary agency in the construction of classical civic buildings in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt lies with the governing bodies of the cities, which financed projects primarily with money drawn from their wealthy members.

### *Chronological Implications*

Due to the fragmentary nature of the available evidence, it is difficult to establish an exact timeline for classical civic construction, and it is even more difficult to discern meaningful patterns within it. Although classical-style urban development was not entirely a Roman innovation, very little evidence for public building exists from the Ptolemaic period in general. Greek-style baths dated only by Ptolemaic coins have been discovered at Kom el-Ahmar,<sup>345</sup> and both archaeological remains and papyrological evidence demonstrate the existence of classical buildings at Herakleopolis in the first century BCE prior to the Roman conquest. The most significant Ptolemaic remains are those of the classical temple dedicated to Ptolemy III and his queen that lie beneath the late Roman basilica at Hermopolis Magna. On the whole however, it appears that the construction of classical buildings did not develop significantly before the Roman conquest.

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<sup>345</sup> el-Mohsen el-Khashab 1949, 28.

Although the chronology of civic construction remains somewhat ambiguous through the Roman period, classical structures from this period are much better documented, and it is clear that their construction became markedly more frequent. Trends in civic building activity throughout the imperial period have been observed by various scholars: Alston and Alston observe a conspicuous continuity in the design of urban centres in first century CE, until the second century, when a “dramatic Romanisation of public architecture” appears to occur;<sup>346</sup> while Lukaszewicz perceives “une réelle manie” for public works in mid-third century CE.<sup>347</sup> It is clear that a great deal of original large-scale construction took place during the time of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius (117-161); the discovery of a colossal head of Hadrian strongly suggests that classical building was being carried out on a monumental scale during his reign.<sup>348</sup> By the third century, a great deal of money was still being expended on public structures, but it was used for the repair and restoration of existing edifices rather than the construction of new ones.<sup>349</sup> Resources continued to be applied to urban development through the fourth century, after which time, the building activity of cities was diverted from secular and pagan spaces to the erection of Christian churches instead.<sup>350</sup>

While it is tempting to look for a link between the pattern of classical civic construction in Egypt and administrative developments within the municipalities, it is very difficult to prove this from the surviving evidence. The most important development in local municipal organization, the granting of official city councils or βουλαί to Egyptian cities by Septimius Severus in 200/201 CE, does not coincide with any immediate change in the rate of construction, and papyrological evidence indicates that municipal councils were functioning in much the same way prior to the proclamation as they did subsequently.<sup>351</sup> The most significant conclusion that can be drawn from examining the chronology of classical civic construction is the boom of building activity

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<sup>346</sup> Alston and Alston 1997, 235-36.

<sup>347</sup> Lukaszewicz 1986, 143.

<sup>348</sup> Alston and Alston 1997, 236.

<sup>349</sup> Bailey 1990, 124.

<sup>350</sup> Bagnall 1995, 54.

<sup>351</sup> E.g. P. Ryl. 2.77.

that began at the end of the first century CE and continued through the second century until finally tapering off around the end of the third century and the beginning of the fourth. Thus, the overall increase in classical building under Roman rule appears to mirror the falloff of indigenous temple construction, under which building continued steadily through the reigns of the first emperors, began to decline in the second half of the first century, and reduced almost entirely to minor additions and decorative programmes after the second century, despite some short-lived resurgences in interest, such as under Antoninus Pius (see Appendix 1.1).<sup>352</sup> I argue that this reveals the economic decline of indigenous religious institutions and the culture that they represented, to the benefit of the Hellenised urban elite.

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<sup>352</sup> For a chronological list of temple construction under the Romans, see Arnold 1999, 323-24 and Appendix 1.1.

#### **1.4. MONUMENTAL BUILDING PATTERNS AND THE ROLE OF INDIGENOUS RELIGIOUS CULTURE: CONCLUSION**

I have examined indigenous temples and classical civic buildings in order to determine what monumental construction can reveal about the status of indigenous religious culture throughout the Ptolemaic and Roman periods. Surviving structures and texts show that indigenous temples were built regularly and on a massive scale under the rule of the Ptolemies. However, after the advent of Roman rule and specifically after the first three emperors, these projects declined in scale, and after the beginning of the second century BCE the original construction of monumental temples was almost unknown. In contrast to this decline, archaeological and documentary remains show that classical civic buildings, while sparse during the Ptolemaic period, proliferated significantly under the Roman administration, especially after the end of the first century CE. Examined together, the contraposition of these two patterns of building activity is striking. As similar enterprises, parallel in both region and nature, they must be connected in some way. I assert that the fate of each of these two contemporary categories of architecture was directly tied to that of the other, and that the factors that contributed to the falloff of the indigenous architectural tradition facilitated the growth of the classical.

It has been demonstrated that the construction of traditional temples was financed with funds collected by the central administration and transferred into the control of the indigenous priestly elites in the form of specifically designated grants. The priests, having originally solicited the grants by exerting their influence with the administration, used the funds to erect and add to sacred structures. On the other hand, I have shown that the classical civic buildings of Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt were financed primarily by the wealthy Hellenic elites who composed the municipal councils governing Egypt's urban centres. In contrast to the circumstances of indigenous temple construction in which the state played a prominent part by granting funding, the central administration

played a minimal role in the erection of classical civic buildings, and did not contribute funds directly to these projects. Nevertheless, it actively encouraged such activity.

As enormously expensive and extensive constructions, indigenous temples and classical civic buildings were the most significant projects undertaken in this period. Therefore, the resources funding these projects must have come from the most significant sources of Egyptian revenue. I have argued that traditional temples and classical civic buildings were financed, respectively, by grants from the state treasury to the temples, and by elite urban individuals either through the paying of council fees or through personal investments. Although these two sources appear distinct, they were connected at a fundamental level.

The wealth of Egypt was derived from its land in the form of agricultural resources, the abundance of which was legendary throughout the ancient world.<sup>353</sup> The funds available to both the state and the indigenous and Hellenised elite during the Ptolemaic and Roman periods would have derived almost entirely from land holdings. If the money used to build indigenous temples and classical civic buildings came from the same source, the different fortunes of the two programmes must be due to a change in how this source was made available for Egyptian building projects.

The state under both the Ptolemies and the Romans controlled a vast percentage of Egypt's land, from which it drew revenue by leasing tracts to private persons and taxing agriculture, among other things. To varying degrees, this remained true throughout the periods in question. By contrast, the economic situation of the indigenous priesthoods altered considerably over time.

Indigenous temples originally controlled substantial amounts of land from which they received an income either from direct agricultural yields, or from leasing it out. Such transactions were often managed by priests, and contracts of this nature cite personal names as opposed to the temples as institutions.<sup>354</sup> This makes it difficult at times to distinguish between private and institutional land holdings. Documents referring to

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<sup>353</sup> See Genesis 12:10; Josephus 2.328; Herodotus 2.

<sup>354</sup> P. Tebt. 2.311; PSI 1143.

legacies within priestly families and the inheritance of property from father to son show that indigenous priestly individuals did control land privately and were capable of independent prosperity.<sup>355</sup> Although the issue is complex, the property of temples and priestly individuals should be seen as equivalent with regard to the status of indigenous religious culture as a whole.

The picture of deprivation after the Roman conquest is certainly revealed by this group collectively. Under Petronius, prefect from 25-21 BCE, the central government began confiscating temple property, and the disadvantaged institutions were offered the option of renting the land they had previously controlled from the state.<sup>356</sup> The economic distress resulting from this measure is well documented in the papyri of the time, as in the petition from 71/2 CE cited above, addressed to the prefect from a group of “hereditary priests”. The plaintiffs refer to sacred land recently appropriated by the state and ask for their property rights to be confirmed instead of accepting a subsidy. In referencing their wives and children, and including a plea for relief, the document suggests that state confiscation of sacred land had left the plaintiffs in financial difficulty.<sup>357</sup>

During the Ptolemaic period, when indigenous temple construction flourished, the wealthy and powerful priestly class exercised significant influence over the building programme and controlled the funds allocated for that purpose by the state. This system produced a pattern of building activity whose fluctuation is attributable to varying royal motivations and the political situation, but whose overall continuation came from the fixed agenda of the priestly elite. By contrast, as shown by the text above, indigenous religious institutions and their representatives were fundamentally disadvantaged by the Romans, and their former prosperity waned. The changes to temple autonomy and assets imposed by the Romans thus coincided with a breakdown of the relationship between temple and state.

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<sup>355</sup> P. Tebt. 2.302.

<sup>356</sup> BGU 4.1200.

<sup>357</sup> P. Tebt. 2.302.

The loss of their wealth and therefore of their standing as the economic upper class must have likewise undermined the political influence of the priestly elite with the administration. Thus, the previous arrangement in which indigenous priests were directly responsible for initiating temple construction and overseeing the use of state-endowed funds could not have endured. This decrease in influence over the financing of sacred construction contributed to the decrease in building work on indigenous temples. This phenomenon was primarily political and economic, and the rural population may have not felt its effects directly as festivals and other social aspects of local religion likely continued unabated. As Frankfurter demonstrates, local indigenous religious culture adapted and survived in a sphere beyond that of the priesthoods and major religious centres, as can be seen in the continued production of statuettes and small shrines at the domestic level.<sup>358</sup> However, the decline in indigenous temple construction in the Roman period after the first century CE is most significantly characterised by the diminishing fortunes of the indigenous priestly elite, which led to the eclipse of their influential role in temple building.

With regard to the classical civic buildings, it is clear that the wealthy Hellenised individuals who composed the city councils and funded the construction of such projects derived what was at least a substantial income from agricultural property. This is shown, for example, in a papyrus document from 208 CE:

To Flavia Petronilla, also called Titanias with her guardian, her husband Gaius Valerius Pansa, ex-gymnasiarch, from ----, and Herius his brother. We desire to lease from you the palm garden called that of Herenius belonging to you in the area of the village of Hephaestias, at a total rental of 1,000 silver drachmas.<sup>359</sup>

That property rented out at such a price represented a considerable income for a single gymnasial individual is demonstrated by a document from Arsinoe, in which the construction of a new record office is mentioned to have cost 3,000 drachmas.<sup>360</sup> What is not clearly outlined in the texts is exactly how this property came into the control of the

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<sup>358</sup> Frankfurter 1998, 143-44.

<sup>359</sup> P. Ryl. 172.

<sup>360</sup> SB 7378.

new urban elite. Despite the lack of definitive evidence, the answer to this question can be easily inferred. It has been shown above that the Romans confiscated land from the temples and subsequently offered to lease it back to them, indicating that the land had passed directly into state control. At the same time, other private individuals, who must be different from those given the option to rent, are recorded as purchasing land directly from the state; some of these transactions even specifically identify the property in question as confiscated land.<sup>361</sup> While no text definitively portrays a gymnasial citizen purchasing land confiscated from the temples by the state, it seems clear from documented instances of confiscation, rentals, and purchases that the land taken out of temple control was made available for purchase by individuals not associated with these institutions. Therefore, I argue that as the newly privileged members of Egypt's land-based economy, the Hellenised urban elite ultimately replaced the indigenous priestly elite as the most important private landowners in Egypt.

Exactly why the Romans took the measures that they did is not clear. From the evidence of legislation exempting persons of Hellenic identity from paying part or all of particular taxes, it could be that the Romans were following a policy of discrimination against the indigenous Egyptians.<sup>362</sup> The impoverishment of the indigenous religious institutions and associated priestly class could have been an extension of such a policy; however, it may also have been a primarily practical act. Johnson maintains that the administration confiscated temple property from fear that the priests' wealth had rendered them so powerful that they might instigate a revolt.<sup>363</sup> If so, the Romans' efforts to insure social order must have been bifocal: endeavouring to maintain indigenous goodwill by financing the construction and improvements of their temples for a time, while ultimately debilitating the priestly elite through impoverishment.<sup>364</sup>

In its simplest form, the transfer of momentum from the indigenous building programme to the classical can be traced to a transfer of land from the control of the

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<sup>361</sup> W. Chr. 375; BGU 1.156; translation in Johnson 1936, 167-68.

<sup>362</sup> See Wallace 1938, 116-34; Bowman and Rathbone 1992, 112.

<sup>363</sup> Johnson 1951, 122.

<sup>364</sup> See Monson 2012, 287.

temples to the Hellenised elite. The indigenous priestly class not only lost the official endowments with which they had funded temple construction but also, through an overall loss of personal wealth, lost the influence with which they had previously solicited the state's considerable resources for the purposes of building projects. Removed from temple control, this property found its way more or less directly into the assets of Egypt's new urban elite, which the councils then applied to the construction of classical civic buildings. The transferred property thus became a direct source of civic building funds, as opposed to its previous role as leverage in the complex dialogue between the temples and the state.

In summary, the relationship between the two distinct building trends of Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt can be expressed as follows: the removal of land from the control of the indigenous priestly elite contributed to the decline of traditional temple building; while the consecutive movement of this property into the control of the Hellenised urban elite contributed to an increase in the construction of classical civic buildings. This reflects a decline in the political influence and economic prosperity of both the priesthoods and the culture that they represented. The evidence of monumental building in Egypt reveals broadly that indigenous religious culture held a high status under the Ptolemies, but after the Roman conquest fell into economic and political decline.

## CHAPTER 2

### Indigenous Hard-Stone Statuary: The Development and Disappearance of a Traditional Art Form

#### 2.1. Introduction

To understand more fully the status of indigenous religious culture in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt, both the macro-economics and micro-economics of the situation must be considered. In this chapter, I turn from monumental construction – at the largest scale of diagnostic data – to examine the more individual evidence of hard-stone statuary from the Ptolemaic period, and the very beginning of the Roman period. Of all surviving material, this statuary is most closely linked to the personal agency of the indigenous elite, offering a view from the perspective of the culture's living representatives. I examine the physical nature and cultural character of this form in order to reveal its significance for the elite. I then consider the pattern of its production throughout the period. In sum, I argue that the characteristics of hard-stone statuary and the virtual disappearance of its production throughout Egypt after the end of the Ptolemaic dynasty indicate that indigenous religious culture, as represented by the holders of priestly titles who composed the indigenous elite, retained a high social and economic status under the Ptolemies but suffered a severe loss of prosperity under the Romans.

#### *Definition of the Source Material*

The evidence must first be defined and circumscribed. Sculpture from Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt comprises many diverse forms and can be divided into various different categories, including colossal figures, two-dimensional images like temple bas-reliefs, and free-standing images.<sup>1</sup> I concentrate on the last of these categories in this chapter because they demonstrate individual agency most clearly.

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<sup>1</sup> See Russmann 2001, 28-45.

Just as the construction of sacred precincts can reflect the collective will and influence of the priesthoods, an art form linked with the construction of a more or less public building, such as architectural sculpture, is representative of an official, collective agenda and detached from individual agency. By contrast, the purpose of this chapter is to analyse the position of persons of priestly status as individual protagonists of indigenous religious culture, as opposed to that of the priestly elite as an organisational whole. In this chapter, I concentrate on free-standing non-royal temple statuary from the Ptolemaic and Roman periods. Although the identities of many of the statue subjects were highly complex, all of the statues I consider can be described as commissioned by holders of priestly office. I argue that the prosperity and subsequent decline of indigenous religious culture is illustrated by five key elements of these statues: medium, context, style, epigraphy, and patterns of production.

### *Previous Research*

The social implications of non-royal statuary have seldom been discussed in modern scholarship, which has often omitted the genre of private statuary from consideration altogether. One of the first scholars to treat sculpture of the Ptolemaic and Roman periods in Egypt was Arnold Lawrence (1925), whose article on Greek sculpture reflects the Hellenocentric attitudes of its time. While Lawrence recognised correctly that there was a resurgence of traditional arts under the patronage of the Ptolemies, noting in particular “some curious portraits” in the native style, he clearly believed that the mixing of indigenous and classical conventions resulted in inferior work, agreeing with David Hogarth that, “it has become a commonplace [idea] that in this field ‘Ptolemaic art is worse every way than Pharaonic’.”<sup>2</sup>

Lawrence’s work on the Ptolemaic period was followed by Paul Graindor’s analysis of the busts and portrait-statues of Roman Egypt, which, like that of Lawrence, displays a Hellenocentric perspective. Nevertheless, Graindor made the significant observation that the social group best represented in Egyptian sculpture, outside of the

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<sup>2</sup> Hogarth 1925, 163-65; Lawrence 1925, 190, 181.

emperors, was that of the indigenous priests, noting that even images wearing a diadem should be assigned to this group.<sup>3</sup>

The subject was next taken up by Ibrahim Noshy, whose examination of Greek and Roman influence on Ptolemaic architecture and sculpture attempted to analyse the latter by dividing the material into three categories: unmixed sculpture (i.e. examples he saw as either wholly classical or wholly indigenous in style), sculpture with mixed elements, and sculpture characterised by attempts to fuse the two styles. Like Lawrence, Noshy identified a revival in traditional art forms under the Ptolemies – specifically from the reign of Ptolemy IV Philopator (221-205 BCE) until the end of the second century BCE – but his observation of a decline in quality of craftsmanship is more nuanced than Lawrence’s broadly negative opinion. Noshy analysed criteria for judging cultural fusion in sculpture closely, stating that evidence for this phenomenon can only be provided by style, as opposed to subject matter, material, or attributes. He concluded that the two cultures generally attempted to remain separate or “pure” and that any borrowing of basic features was primarily superficial. His approach is also highly Hellenocentric, and he did not mention private portraiture specifically in any of his three categories.<sup>4</sup>

While not addressing the Ptolemaic or Roman periods, Rudolph Anthes’ examination of the relationship between Greek and Egyptian statuary in the 7th and 6th centuries provides valuable context for their study. Anthes outlined the history of Egyptian and Mediterranean cultural interaction, highlighting the millennium between 700 BCE and 300 CE when the impact of Egyptian civilisation affected the culture of the whole Eastern Mediterranean. In particular, he traced the individualising trend that characterises private sculpture of the Ptolemaic and Roman periods back to the very beginning of such interaction.<sup>5</sup>

Much scholarship focuses on the analysis of royal sculpture, and there is a general dearth of work by scholars of the Hellenistic and Roman worlds on images of private non-royal persons. While this tendency is seen in Zsolt Kiss and Maria Berger’s study of

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<sup>3</sup> Graindor 1936, 12, 21.

<sup>4</sup> Noshy 1937, 123, 142, 145, 146.

<sup>5</sup> Anthes 1963, 60-81.

Imperial Roman portraits in Egypt, the authors acknowledge that a hard-stone sculpted head with a traditional back pillar, which they identify as a representation of Nero, is nevertheless more comparable to private forms that flourished in the late Ptolemaic period than to royal portraiture.<sup>6</sup>

Jack Josephson's work on Egyptian royal sculpture in the Late Period makes many references to private sculpture as the background against which royal images must be understood.<sup>7</sup> Similarly, Sally Ann Ashton's more narrowly defined study of Ptolemaic royal sculpture discusses private statuary as exhibiting the interaction of Greek and Egyptian traditions. She observes that private statues demonstrate continuity from the pharaonic Late Period to Ptolemaic times, a pattern of development that also affects her royal subject matter strongly.<sup>8</sup>

The meaningful study of late Egyptian statuary of non-royal individuals was led by Bernard V. Bothmer.<sup>9</sup> In contrast to the previous, royalty-focused studies, Bothmer is noteworthy for largely bypassing royal statues and focusing overwhelmingly on private works. Whereas earlier authors concurred in seeing a marked decline in the quality of Egyptian statuary in the Ptolemaic and Roman periods, Bothmer rejected this idea. Instead, in the Brooklyn Museum exhibition catalogue *Egyptian Sculpture of the Late Period* (1960, slightly revised 1969), he argued that the art of this period displays "the extraordinary competence of Egyptian craftsmen" as well as a "tenacity of tradition".<sup>10</sup> Following the publication of the catalogue, Bothmer continued to study Late Period Egyptian sculpture. Examples of his work in this area include his article with Herman de Meulenaere on the Brooklyn statue of Hor, son of Pawen, which includes a lengthy excursus on the shaven-headed portrait type, and his paper on Hellenistic elements in

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<sup>6</sup> Bothmer et al. 1969, 176-77, no. 135, pl. 127, figs 338-39; Kiss and Berger 1984, 46-47, figs 81-84.

<sup>7</sup> Josephson 1997a, 11, 20, 44.

<sup>8</sup> Ashton 2001, 11, 22.

<sup>9</sup> Bothmer 1951, 1954, 1996.

<sup>10</sup> Bothmer et al. 1969, 5, xxxiii.

Egyptian sculpture.<sup>11</sup> In general, Bothmer attended to the multi-cultural context of the material, leading a less prejudiced and more detailed approach to this field.

Like Bothmer, Claude Vandersleyen does not believe that the sculpture of the Ptolemaic and Roman periods displays a decline in quality, instead describing the naturalism observable in this later statuary as “subtle” and “avant-garde”.<sup>12</sup> However, Vandersleyen attributes the developments of realism and naturalistic modelling unequivocally to the positive influence of Greek sculptors on a rigid and abstract artistic tradition, which was thus improved by contact with this different representational mode. To a certain extent, this view parallels Bothmer’s opinions on Hellenistic influence in Egyptian sculpture, while also hearkening back to the Hellenocentrism of earlier scholars.

This approach has been rejected by Robert Bianchi, who not only opposes the Hellenocentric views of scholars such as Lawrence and Noshy but also objects to the notion that Egyptian portraiture in the Ptolemaic period displays Hellenistic influence.<sup>13</sup> Bianchi has created a complex typology which he applies to the corpus of Late Period Egyptian statuary with the aim of dating examples more accurately. While such a system is necessarily tentative, Bianchi does meaningfully address several questions important for understanding the material, such as his analyses of shaven-headed images and of striding draped male figures.<sup>14</sup> Bianchi’s catalogue of the Brooklyn Museum’s exhibition *Cleopatra’s Egypt* (1988) is a source of great value for the subject as a whole.

In contrast to scholars such as Bothmer and Vandersleyen who state that Egyptian sculpture of the later periods is indebted stylistically to foreign influence, Susan Wood’s observations of Egyptianising elements in Roman sculpture of the Imperial period imply that traditional Egyptian art was actively influencing that of Rome, a view in keeping with Bianchi’s convictions.<sup>15</sup> Wood compares the style of certain portrait heads of Isiac

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<sup>11</sup> Bothmer and de Meulenaere 1985; Bothmer et al. 1996.

<sup>12</sup> Vandersleyen 1985, 358, 369.

<sup>13</sup> Bianchi 1988, 55.

<sup>14</sup> Bianchi 1976, 1982.

<sup>15</sup> Wood 1987, 124.

priests in Rome with Egyptian ‘eggheads’, that is, naturalistic, hairless images of indigenous priests produced in the Late and Ptolemaic periods. In doing so, she places the starting point of artistic transmission in Egypt instead of the other way around, while highlighting the importance of traditional Egyptian religion in the diffusion of aesthetic taste and art forms.

R. R. R. Smith’s study of Ptolemaic portraits introduces a new perspective on cultural interplay by defining the concept of Hellenistic influence as an Alexandrian factor, traceable directly to the will of the ruling power. Paying particular attention to royal images, Smith describes the evidence of new designs in statues as demonstrating communication between the administration and Egyptian priesthoods and temple institutions involved in creating the sculpture. Most significantly, Smith hints at the potential implications of such a configuration of actors for indigenous religious culture, in particular with regard to the character of the relationship between the indigenous elite and the Ptolemaic monarchs.<sup>16</sup>

In his study of indigenous art (which he terms “pharaonica”) found at Alexandria, Jean Yoyotte mentions several statues of indigenous elite persons found in the region – including that of Hor, Psherenptah, and a woman named Ptolemaia – and concludes that images depicting indigenous elites and bearing hieroglyphic inscriptions must have been found in temples in Alexandria with some frequency.<sup>17</sup> The question of female statuary from the Ptolemaic and Roman periods is considered in detail by Sabine Albersmeier, who has produced an extensive catalogue of these figures and notes the significant fact that 72% of the material in this corpus is formed from hard stones.<sup>18</sup> Albersmeier also usefully examines several recently discovered statues of Ptolemaic queens from Alexandria, Canopus, and Thonis -Heracleion.<sup>19</sup>

Studies of relevant Egyptian statues published in the last two decades include Ivan Guermeur’s discussion of the statue of the *syngenes* Aristonikos from the small

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<sup>16</sup> Smith 1996, 204-05, 210.

<sup>17</sup> Yoyotte 1998, 209.

<sup>18</sup> Albersmeier 2002, 18.

<sup>19</sup> Albersmeier 2010, 191-201.

centre of To-bener in the Delta. Guermeur departs from previous typological approaches to focus on the implications of the identity of the statue's owner, analysing the form of the piece alongside information deriving from its inscription.<sup>20</sup> Studies such as Guermeur's nuance the categorical statements of previous scholars by referring to specific examples, as well as demonstrating the broader significance of non-royal statues for the study of the Ptolemaic and Roman periods. Similarly, Ian Moyer's work on indigenous individuals at the Ptolemaic court draws heavily on traditional statues of *syngeneis*, shedding light on the implications of this genre.<sup>21</sup> Moyer argues that the chronology of these statues shows that indigenous status developed in a positive direction under the Ptolemies, supporting the first conclusion of this chapter. He does not, however, pursue this question after the Roman conquest when both the statue type and office seem to have disappeared. More detailed studies of statues from specific regions include that of Christiane Zivie-Coche, who examines several private statues from Tanis,<sup>22</sup> and of Aly Abdalla, who looks at three important figures from Dendera and analyses their inscriptions.<sup>23</sup>

The most substantial recent work on this area is the Jacquemart-André Museum catalogue edited by Olivier Perdu and Raphaëlle Meffre, which addresses several of the most famous examples of this type.<sup>24</sup> The subject matter of this chapter has been discussed in most detail by Aleksandra Warda in her thesis on the striding draped male figures of the Late, Ptolemaic, and Roman periods.<sup>25</sup> By focusing exclusively on this type, Warda is able to produce a more detailed analysis of private, hard-stone statuary than any other scholar to date. Her work is an excellent source of information and data on the type, but the implications of their production remain largely unexamined.

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<sup>20</sup> Guermeur 2000.

<sup>21</sup> Moyer 2011.

<sup>22</sup> Zivie-Coche 2004, 447-559.

<sup>23</sup> Abdalla 1994, 1-24, pls 4-5.

<sup>24</sup> Perdu and Meffre 2012.

<sup>25</sup> Warda 2011.

I draw upon the works cited in seeking to demonstrate that, as a genre, hard-stone private statuary can shed light on the circumstances of its patrons, and more broadly on its cultural context, to an extent that has not yet been fully appreciated.

## **2.2. Statues as Representing Economic, Cultural, and Social Prominence**

### ***The Cultural and Economic Significance of Hard Stone and Implications of its Display***

The first factor to consider is the medium of the statues. The material used has far-reaching implications for the status of the statue owners, as well as other matters. In this chapter I concentrate on images executed in hard stone, as opposed to media such as wood, limestone, and terracotta. The favourable survival rate for hard-stone pieces has resulted in the presence of a large body of evidence from all regions of the country, particularly the Delta whose humidity and rising water table have destroyed more perishable media.<sup>26</sup> In addition to this factor, hard stone is vital for the question addressed here because it has clear economic and cultural implications, while the treatment of the stone offers insight into its intended mode of display.

It is often difficult to ascertain the exact stone of which an ancient statue is made because the internal structure of a figure is hard to assess in the absence of a recent break. Instead, material is often identified tentatively on the basis of color and overall appearance.<sup>27</sup> It can nonetheless always be identified as belonging within the category of either soft or hard stone, and often to a type within the category, such as ‘a basalt’.<sup>28</sup> Since I am concerned with the implications of hard stones as a whole, this broad identification is sufficient for discussion here.

The choice of hard-stone statuary for this analysis is not made at the expense of ignoring other media genres that could mitigate its significance. While many important Egyptian statues in limestone and marble survive from the Ptolemaic and Roman periods, these are predominantly in the Hellenistic style, following the naturalising mode and

<sup>26</sup> See e.g. Warda 2011, vol. 2, 107-11, 112-19, cat. nos 10, 11.

<sup>27</sup> See Rapp 2002, 46.

<sup>28</sup> Klemm and Klemm 2008, 11.

flowing lines of classical Greek and Roman sculpture. Soft stones, a group that includes most limestones and sandstones according to the Moh hardness scale,<sup>29</sup> were freely available in Egypt, and indigenous Egyptian sculptors were familiar with their use.<sup>30</sup> Although marble was a relatively new arrival in Egypt,<sup>31</sup> the Egyptians shared with the Greeks and Romans a long tradition of working in limestone, in both representational art and architecture.<sup>32</sup> The poor survival rate of soft stones in the Delta, where limestone is often recycled into lime, could partially account for their scarcity in the record. Nonetheless, it seems that the vast majority of private statues made in the indigenous style from the Late Period to the Roman conquest were fashioned of hard stones, to the extent that Bothmer noted, “at no other time were soft and light stones so little used by the native Egyptians.”<sup>33</sup>

#### *Hard Stone as Associated with Indigenous Culture*

The use of hard stone has significant cultural implications. In contrast to classical tradition, which valued the malleability, translucence, and whiteness of marble,<sup>34</sup> Egyptians long had prized dark dense stones, such as the siltstone, basalt, granite, granodiorite, and gneiss found mostly in the deserts bordering their country.<sup>35</sup> Noshy hypothesised that this preference of Egyptian artists was influenced by the lack of naturally occurring marble in the Nile Valley;<sup>36</sup> however, the prevalence of other soft stones throughout the country—with limestone predominant in the north and sandstone south of Gebel el-Silsila (see Fig. 2.1)<sup>37</sup>—suggests that this concern was not a factor in their choices. Hard stones had characterised Egyptian sculpture at least since the Old

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<sup>29</sup> See Stocks 2002, 17, table 1.1.

<sup>30</sup> Aston, Harrell, and Shaw 2000, 42.

<sup>31</sup> Aston, Harrell, and Shaw 2000, 44.

<sup>32</sup> E.g. Boardman 2002, 10; Robins 2008, 24; Spivey 2013, 64-65.

<sup>33</sup> Bothmer et al. 1969, xi, 19, 119.

<sup>34</sup> Spivey 2013, 64-68.

<sup>35</sup> See Harrell, [http://www.quarryscapes.no/egypt\\_nile.php](http://www.quarryscapes.no/egypt_nile.php)

<sup>36</sup> Noshy 1937, 87; Shaw and Nicholson 2000, 44-45.

<sup>37</sup> Baines and Málek 1980, 21.

Kingdom,<sup>38</sup> and the customs surrounding their use indicate that the choice to use them was deliberate.

It has been observed that, in the absence of precious stones such as diamonds and rubies, for the Egyptians, hard stones took the place of gems.<sup>39</sup> These stones were imbued with deep meaning and their production was closely associated with certain deities and divine qualities of regeneration.<sup>40</sup> This can also be seen in the historically exclusive use of these stones. Gneiss, for example, had in the past been restricted largely to depictions of deities and royalty, or at least persons with stated royal connections.<sup>41</sup> That the Egyptians recognised the durability of these stones is clear from their use in objects such as obelisks that were subject to severe strain in their erection,<sup>42</sup> an engineering feat requiring a precise understanding of the stones' properties.<sup>43</sup> This durability was almost certainly valued in the pursuit of everlasting existence. Statue inscriptions often express the desire for the name of the person depicted to endure forever before the gods.<sup>44</sup> As an image placed permanently in a sacred environment, and hence in the presence of the divine, a temple statue was the physical expression and embodiment of this wish. It follows, therefore, that an image in hard stone would have been appreciated as significantly more likely to fulfill this purpose than one crafted from a less durable material.

That the meaning of hard stones was metaphysical as much as practical is confirmed by texts, including a Roman period hieratic priestly manual and a demotic treatise on the primaeval ocean,<sup>45</sup> which state that stones were recognised as emanations of the divine, and thus appropriate to be used in sacred spaces.<sup>46</sup> Practical applications of this meaning are seen, for example, in the use of basalt for Old Kingdom temple

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<sup>38</sup> Harris 1961, 69-82; Aston, Harrell, and Shaw 2000, 24.

<sup>39</sup> Aufrère 1991, 102.

<sup>40</sup> Aufrère 1991, 103.

<sup>41</sup> Baines 2007, 272-75.

<sup>42</sup> Aufrère 1991, 95-97; Aston, Harrell, and Shaw 2000, 6-7.

<sup>43</sup> See Baines 2007, 275.

<sup>44</sup> E.g. Warda 2011, vol. 2, 202, cat. no. 19.

<sup>45</sup> P. Carlsb. 5.182; PSI 1.77; P. Carlsb. 5.302; PSI 500.7.

<sup>46</sup> Warda 2011, vol. 1, 61.

pavements in the necropoleis of Giza and Saqqara, where it also may have symbolised the sacred black land of Egypt.<sup>47</sup> Hard stones occupied a special position in Egyptian thought, a fact no doubt understood by indigenous priests, the prime conservators of sacred knowledge in the latest periods.

The significance and enduring use of hard stones in Egypt contrasted with their scarcity in art elsewhere in the Mediterranean. They therefore had an archetypally Egyptian identity. Throughout the Mediterranean world the use of hard stone in a sculpture was enough to imbue the piece with an Egyptian character regardless of its style or location.<sup>48</sup> By continuing the ancient tradition of hard-stone sculpture in contrast to the classical predilection for marble or the more culturally neutral limestone, the widespread use of this medium in private Egyptian statues during the Ptolemaic and to a certain extent the Roman periods shows a clear adherence to traditional indigenous culture among those who commissioned them.

#### *Hard Stone as an Indicator of Wealth*

Apart from the cultural implications of hard stone, its use represented a significant investment, so that the production of such statuary is an important indicator of the affluence of its patrons. Unlike marble and limestone, which can be sculpted with relative ease with a hammer and chisel, hard stones could only be shaped through intensive methods such as drilling, pounding, and abrasion.<sup>49</sup> Despite the well-developed skill of Egyptian artisans, these techniques would have required both special skills and far more time and effort than softer stones,<sup>50</sup> as would also have been true of the initial process of hewing the material from the quarry.<sup>51</sup> Fine craftsmanship, whether in wood or in soft stones, must have been highly valued, of course, and good quality wood was also

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<sup>47</sup> Aston, Harrell, and Shaw 2000, 24.

<sup>48</sup> Vermeule and Newman 1990, 41.

<sup>49</sup> Aston, Harrell, and Shaw 2000, 42-47; Klemm and Klemm 2008, 245-49.

<sup>50</sup> Bothmer et al. 1969, xxxviii; Tomoum 2005, 171.

<sup>51</sup> Aston, Harrell, and Shaw 2000, 6-7.

a rare commodity in the Nile Valley.<sup>52</sup> However, because hard stone was difficult to work, a statue in hard stone required a higher outlay of labour than would a figure of similar size in a softer medium such as wood or limestone. Smaller pieces in hard stone are particular examples of the sculptor's skill, and it may be that diminutive but exquisitely modeled pieces such as the "Portrait of a Wise Man" and "Boston Green Head" were at least as time-consuming to create as larger specimens (see Figs 2.8, 2.9).<sup>53</sup>

Due to the geology of Egypt, soft stones were more widespread and easier to obtain. Of the roughly 180 known ancient quarry sites along the Nile Valley, 139 produced stones such as limestone, travertine, and sandstone, while hard stone was largely restricted to deposits in the south and the Eastern Desert (see Fig. 2.1).<sup>54</sup> The cost of hard stones in urban centres therefore must have included the expense of transporting the unworked blocks or unfinished statues from far-flung quarries such as those near Aswan, in contrast to soft stones, which often traveled a shorter distance from quarry to workshop.<sup>55</sup> That hard-stone statuary required a substantial investment is supported further by the early tradition of confining hard stones to depictions of royalty and the divine, a convention that probably reflects both symbolic importance and the value of the stones.

That hard stones were a valuable commodity is supported by pieces that were reworked for a second owner. One such example, the over life-size first century BCE granite image of Hor son of Tutu (Fig. 2.18 a, b) from Sais, shows clear signs of remodeling in the removal of a rosette diadem, which was replaced by natural hair.<sup>56</sup> While Bothmer suggested that this modification could show the subject suffered a loss of status, Katja Lembke and Günther Vittmann argue that the piece, which was found in Alexandria, was appropriated by the Romans.<sup>57</sup> Reworking is a common phenomenon both in the Ptolemaic and Roman periods and earlier, as seen, for example, in a granite

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<sup>52</sup> See Legrain 1906, 145-46; Hastings 1997, xxxii-xxxiv, 2.

<sup>53</sup> Perdu and Meffre 2012, 90-93, cat. nos 34, 35.

<sup>54</sup> Harrell, [http://www.quarryscapes.no/egypt\\_nile.php](http://www.quarryscapes.no/egypt_nile.php); Aston, Harrell, and Shaw 2000, 8-9, fig. 2.1.

<sup>55</sup> See Aston, Harrell, and Shaw 2000, 17-20.

<sup>56</sup> Bothmer 1996, 219.

<sup>57</sup> Lembke and Vittman 1999, 301-06, 313.

statue of Amenhotep son of Hapu from Karnak (Fig. 2.11).<sup>58</sup> This man was a high official under Amenhotep III (Dynasty 18, c. 1430-1350 BCE) who was honoured extensively by the pharaoh and later deified in a similar fashion as Imhotep and regarded as an intermediary to Amun.<sup>59</sup> The face of this statue was recut to resemble the features of his other surviving images, suggesting that the image may have been remodeled from an earlier figure.<sup>60</sup> Another significant example is a statue bearing the name of Shedsunefertem, High Priest at Memphis at the beginning of the 22nd Dynasty. Anthony Leahy has observed that the fine craftsmanship of the statue appears to be inconsistent with the poorly carved inscription, and suggests that the statue originally belonged to Khaemwaset, a son of Rameses II (Dynasty 19, c. 1270 BCE).<sup>61</sup> The statues of Amenhotep son of Hapu and of Shedsunefertem show that there was active curation and reuse of old statues in later periods. This activity, as with a broad range of older styles, would have been visible in the Ptolemaic period and may have been echoed in reworked Ptolemaic examples like the statue of Hor son of Tutu.

That the use of older sites and elements was a common occurrence is shown by the scavenging of the city of Pi-Rameses, where monumental stone objects such as entire obelisks, statues, and sphinxes were taken away to be set up in the city of Tanis during the 21st and 22nd Dynasties.<sup>62</sup> Alexandria clearly had skilled artisans capable of working newly quarried hard stone;<sup>63</sup> however, there are also many instances of objects found at Alexandria having been brought from temples throughout Upper Egypt, including pieces from Memphis and Sais.<sup>64</sup> Reuse of hard-stone figures can be seen in other contexts as well, such as the sphinxes imported from Egypt to the Iseum Campense in Rome, or the proposed falcon-headed sphinx found off the coast of Alexandria, thought to be a possible acquisition from an earlier dynastic context.<sup>65</sup> Whether these actions were

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<sup>58</sup> See Breasted 1906, 371-79; Scott 1989, 281-96.

<sup>59</sup> Ockinga 1986, 1-6.

<sup>60</sup> Scott 1989, 295.

<sup>61</sup> Leahy 2006, 180-83.

<sup>62</sup> Yoyotte 1998, 201.

<sup>63</sup> See Albersmeier 2010, figs 16.1, 16.6-9.

<sup>64</sup> Yoyotte 1998, 202-03.

<sup>65</sup> Kiss 1998, 175, 178, figs 82.

inspired by frugality, time concerns, a desire to appropriate the image of another, or in order to correct damage, the choice to rework an existing hard-stone statue rather than commission a wholly new image indicates the significance and value of this medium.

Similarly, the fact that most of these images seem not to have been reworked, especially the evidence of ritual depositions, demonstrates that most statues set up in temples would have been preserved in their original form until being deliberately disposed of. This suggests that temples and/or workshops did not maintain stores of images to be reused. The choice to set up a new hard-stone statue must have largely taken into account the full cost of commissioning an original work.

#### *Choice and Presentation of Medium*

There should have been no logistical reason preventing indigenous sculptors from acquiring limestone or another soft stone, which was easier to obtain and carve than hard stones.<sup>66</sup> Furthermore, sculptors of hard-stone statues would not have been hindered from using limestone by ignorance of technique. Although the level of expertise apparent in finished hard-stone figures indicates that sculptors likely specialised in that medium, sculptors trained in the indigenous tradition were almost certainly also familiar with working softer stones. This is seen in the “sculptor’s models” whose numbers increase dramatically from the Late through the Ptolemaic period. Created from soft materials such as limestone or plaster and frequently bearing preparatory gridlines, these images are most commonly understood to have served as practice pieces for sculptors.<sup>67</sup> The increase in sculptor’s models coincides with the Late Period increase in hard-stone images, and drops off at about the same time.<sup>68</sup> In view of the relative scarcity at this time of soft stone images in contexts reserved for finished products, many of the sculptors who trained on the models must have moved on to working hard stones. It is clear that hard stone was a deliberate choice of the patron who was undeterred by consideration of costs.

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<sup>66</sup> Bothmer et al. 1969, 119.

<sup>67</sup> See Seipel 1992, 468-93; Tomoum 2005, 4.

<sup>68</sup> Bothmer et al. 1969, xi, 119; 172-73, cat. no. 132.

Patrons must also have intended for viewers to appreciate the kind of stone used. The general absence of paint traces on hard-stone images from the Ptolemaic and Roman periods suggests that the medium of most of these images was plainly visible.<sup>69</sup> Baines notes that many of them might have been painted originally, and the loss of pigment could be due to humidity in the environment where they have lain since antiquity.<sup>70</sup> The alternation between polished and matte surfaces seen in numerous examples also suggests that some were partially plastered and painted or gilded, treatments that adhere best to a rough surface.<sup>71</sup> If the matte areas of a statue were covered with another material, the adjacent polished surfaces would likely have remained bare, making the exposed medium conspicuous next to the treated part. Even if the statue were completely covered in paint and the medium not visible, the choice of the more expensive option highlights the significance of the selected material all the more: it must have been integral to the finished piece, and is thus vital to its understanding.

If the medium of these images was meant to be seen and recognised, the decision to use a hard stone instead of a more easily worked material makes these statues items of conspicuous consumption. Beyond such considerations, however, the wealthy elite who commissioned these images formed the higher reaches of the indigenous intellectual elite and must have understood the associations of the medium, and its cultural value. By continuing and expanding the traditional preference for hard stones almost to the exclusion of soft stones, the priestly patrons underscored their adherence to indigenous tradition. The specific associations with indigenous culture, high cost, and conspicuous presentation of the hard stone medium indicates equally that the priestly commissioners of statues in the Ptolemaic and Roman periods deliberately chose to represent themselves in a culturally Egyptian mode, and that they evidently had significant resources at their disposal.

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<sup>69</sup> See Bothmer et al. 1969, 26-27, cat. no. 23.

<sup>70</sup> Baines 2007, 273.

<sup>71</sup> Reuterswärd 1958, 56-57; Bianchi 1988, 72.

*The Temple as an Archive of the Statue Tradition and Stage for its Display*

*An Environment Promoting Tradition*

If the visibility of hard stone in statues demonstrates the commissioners' awareness of display, the temple spaces where they were installed are similarly significant. Exact provenances of statues are often unknown or unclear due to looting, heedless excavations, and the fact that they could have been moved in antiquity. An example of the difficulties this practice creates is a statue with an inscription addressed to the priests of Sais in the Delta that was found at Memphis, over 150 kilometers to the south.<sup>72</sup> Thus it is clear that leading members of the elite also dedicated images in multiple places.<sup>73</sup> However, while the original location of many pieces may be uncertain, examples found *in situ* all come from temple contexts, and there is very little evidence that private statues were displayed elsewhere. Hard-stone private statuary from the Ptolemaic and Roman periods should thus be understood as originally intended for placement within Egypt's sacred precincts.<sup>74</sup>

The character of these temple environments and of the display of statues within them is most clearly seen in the Karnak Cachette, the largest discovery of statuary in Egypt.<sup>75</sup> Found in the court next to the Seventh Pylon in the Temple of Amun at Karnak, the Cachette consisted of a pit in which many hundreds of stone statues were buried some time in the Ptolemaic period, having been removed from the temple presumably in order to alleviate clutter and perhaps to create space for the installation of new statues.<sup>76</sup> These were accompanied by nearly 17,000 bronze statuettes and many wooden statues, described as some of the finest material in the Cachette but which crumbled to dust upon excavation.<sup>77</sup> While many of the figures depict rulers and deities, the vast majority of the nearly 800 hard-stone statues, dating from the Old Kingdom to Ptolemaic times, portray elite males who held priestly office at Karnak. These statues can often only be

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<sup>72</sup> Bothmer et al. 1969, 40-42, cat. no. 34.

<sup>73</sup> Crawford 1980, 78.

<sup>74</sup> Bothmer et al. 1969, xxxiii.

<sup>75</sup> Azim and Réveillac 2004, 275-334; Goyon, Cardon, Azim, and Zaki 2004, 12-22.

<sup>76</sup> Bothmer et al. 1969, 151-53, cat. no. 117.

<sup>77</sup> Legrain 1906, 145-46.

approximately dated. However, 2 are dated to the Old Kingdom, about 20 to the Middle Kingdom, fewer than 200 to the New Kingdom, fewer than 150 to the Third Intermediate Period, about 20 to the Late Period, and over 150 to the Ptolemaic period. The fact that, according to this quantification, the second largest number of statues comes from one of the shortest periods of time is striking. None of these statues is dated to the Roman period.<sup>78</sup> Since all of these statues had been presumably set up in the temple complex, their sheer number highlights the prominence of such images inside indigenous religious institutions.

The wide temporal range of the images found at Karnak shows that those who commissioned statues in the Ptolemaic period were following a long-established tradition, and the requirement to bury surplus pieces ritually can only have emphasised the weight of the custom. Furthermore, the profusion of earlier statues in the temples – to the extent that it became necessary at times to bury the lot and begin the accumulation anew – means that the priests must have been quite conscious of following this custom. Statues were ritual objects, and their installation must have been accompanied by some ceremony, possibly similar to the “opening of the mouth” used both in funerary rites and to render statues of divinities capable of receiving the presence of the god,<sup>79</sup> which would have called attention to their presence. Likewise, the mass deposition of temple statues was probably solemnised, while the effort of removing and burying so many heavy objects would have made the occasion significant and memorable.

The Karnak Cachette is exceptional in scale, but it has parallels, for example, in numerous statues of different sizes, materials, and mixed cultural character found buried in pits at the sacred animal necropolis at Saqqara.<sup>80</sup> Other, smaller caches of statues have also been found throughout Egypt, such as the group of first-century CE basalt figures discovered at Dime, Soknopaiou Nesos in the Fayyum,<sup>81</sup> the group of priestly statues dating from the 11th Dynasty through the Ptolemaic and Roman periods found in the

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<sup>78</sup> Coulon and Jambon, <http://www.ifao.egnet.net/bases/cachette/>.

<sup>79</sup> Dunand and Zivie-Coche 2004, 15.

<sup>80</sup> Hastings 1997, xxvii-xxxv; Thompson 2012, 192-94.

<sup>81</sup> Bianchi 1992, 23-26, e.g. pl. 3.12; Lembke 1998, 291-92, figs 2-3.

*sebakh* surrounding the Temple of Hathor at Dendera,<sup>82</sup> and the large number of figures discovered at Tanis, which, although they do not appear to have been deposited ritualistically, nonetheless give evidence for great quantities of statues at the site.<sup>83</sup> There is thus no reason to imagine that the circumstances of the Karnak Cachette were not typical of the accumulation of statues in the temples of Egypt, at least those that were major religious centres like Karnak and Saqqara. The temple context of hard-stone private statues therefore indicates that their commissioners were consciously continuing an indigenous tradition, not only in the choice of medium as discussed above, but also in the production and installation of the statues themselves.

### *Display and its Implications*

While the focus of statue commissions was religious and at least partly otherworldly, factors such as the conspicuous use of hard stone raise the question of display and its implications. The innermost chambers of a temple were permanently off-limits to visitors; however, non-priestly visitors, both indigenous Egyptians and foreigners, were probably permitted into the spacious outer precincts where most temple statues would have been set up.<sup>84</sup> That temple statues were the objects of public attention and interaction is shown by such statues as the 18th Dynasty figure of Amenhotep son of Hapu discussed above (Fig. 2.11). The inscribed laps of the statues of him set up on the north side of Pylon 10 at Karnak are heavily worn, indicating that worshippers touched these surfaces talismanically over many centuries of display.<sup>85</sup> It is thus apparent that temple statues could be displayed in publicly accessible places.

The display of these statues also memorialised their owners. Many appear to have been dedicated after the death of the person depicted, often being commissioned by a son.<sup>86</sup> A permanent image of a private person in a sacred space represented him in

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<sup>82</sup> Abdalla 1994, 1-24, pls 4-5.

<sup>83</sup> See Zivie-Coche 1998, 447-559, esp. 503.

<sup>84</sup> Bothmer et al. 1969, xxxiii.

<sup>85</sup> Ockinga 1986, 5; Scott 1989, 289.

<sup>86</sup> E.g. Bothmer et al. 1969, 52-53, cat. no. 45.

perpetual proximity to and in attendance upon the gods,<sup>87</sup> and the inscriptions frequently refer to this idea, such as stating “may his name endure before Isis for ever and eternally.”<sup>88</sup> As the act of an individual to leave behind an enduring memorial, a temple statue has the dual purpose of attending the deity and perpetuating the owner’s memory. Statues often also appeal to the living in hieroglyphic inscriptions, usually placed along a back pillar, which inform the reader that the statue will act as an intermediary, and claim to play a part in the reversion of offerings left by the living for the benefit of the deceased person.<sup>89</sup> The statues thus convey an awareness of having an audience, and would ideally be permanent features of the sacred space that could be viewed by the living whom they address.

The temple was a material archive of such statues and other monuments demonstrating the long history of the custom. Thus, this self-representation must have been undertaken as a conscious continuation of a long-standing indigenous tradition. Furthermore, the logistics of temple visitation, combined with the proof of wear on certain statues, show that images erected therein were intended for at least semi-public exhibition. Finally, the commemorative role of a statue as a permanent monument that could address the living suggests that the priestly commissioners were profoundly aware of their audience. This shows that the hard-stone statues commissioned by the priestly elite were conscious public displays of adherence to a traditional religious practice.<sup>90</sup>

### **2.3. Significance of the Continuation and Adaptation of Indigenous Modes**

While the medium and context of a genre say much about its character, a core principle of art history is that an object’s cultural affiliation is indicated most fundamentally by its style or representational system.<sup>91</sup> If the medium and context of private statuary show that the indigenous elite adhered to traditional Egyptian culture,

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<sup>87</sup> See Bothmer et al. 1969, 53-54, cat. no. 46.

<sup>88</sup> Warda 2011, vol. 2, 202, cat. no. 19.

<sup>89</sup> See Zivie-Coche 2001a, 391-92.

<sup>90</sup> See Bothmer et al. 1969, xxxiii.

<sup>91</sup> See Noshy 1937, 123; Preziosi 2009, 578.

then the style of the pieces is even more significant in the display of affiliation. I now consider the stylistic aspects of the statues in order to investigate how far they show a continuing or changing culture. I argue that the features of hard-stone statues in the Ptolemaic and Roman periods primarily continue indigenous traditions, in a way that was fitting and logical for the temple contexts of the statues. Nevertheless, the introduction of some innovative traits shows that the genre was not resistant to Hellenistic influence but rather capable of developing and incorporating elements from another culture. This demonstrates the confident and assured cultural identity of the patrons.

### *Features of Indigenous Statuary and Evolution of Indigenous Style*

While it is impossible to summarise here the wide range of representational systems or styles in late Egyptian private sculpture, the genre's cultural significance is demonstrated by certain basic features. Due to the disparity of figural poses between the Egyptian and classical artistic traditions, one of the most distinctive aspects of statues of the Ptolemaic and Roman periods is the appearance of the lower body. Throughout the long history of Egyptian statuary sculptors worked predominantly within a core set of distinctive representational conventions that resulted in highly recognisable forms.<sup>92</sup> An impression of excessive uniformity produced by these conventions is not representative of the tradition's complexity. Nonetheless, this superficial homogeneity can be exploited to examine the continuity of conventions in the period under study.

Classical Greek and Roman depictions of human subjects are characterised by a naturalising stance. Standing figures mostly exhibit contrapposto, with angled hips and shoulders and a curved torso. This posture encourages the viewer of a freestanding statue to move around it in order to appreciate it from several angles.<sup>93</sup> In contrast, traditional Egyptian statuary employs a basically frontal orientation, facing forward on a fixed axis with a roughly equal distribution of weight.<sup>94</sup> This frontality is so fundamental that Heinrich Schäfer argued that three-dimensional images should be exhibited specifically

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<sup>92</sup> E.g. Robins 2008, 37-38.

<sup>93</sup> Boardman 2002, 21, 25-26.

<sup>94</sup> See Schäfer 1986, 310-34; Robins 2001, 19; 2008, 19.

so as to show their front to the viewer.<sup>95</sup> This orientation continued in the Ptolemaic and Roman periods, to the extent that Bianchi has suggested that omitting to finish the back of a statue is distinctive of late Ptolemaic craftsmanship.<sup>96</sup> While this could also have been due to an increased difficulty of finding sculptors capable of carving hieroglyphic inscriptions in the hard stone of the back pillars, the orientation was suited to the context of crowded temples, whose layouts suggest that spaces would have been lined with images in rows against the walls.<sup>97</sup> They would not have been displayed on central plinths to be circled and viewed from multiple angles.

Types of pose are also distinctive, and there are several recognisable basic forms. Bothmer identified six types of Late Period statues: standing, seated, kneeling, block, asymmetrical squatting, and squatting, all of which had ancient origins.<sup>98</sup> Certain attributes, such as the shrines carried by the naophorous figures (see e.g. Fig. 2.2), became much more common in the later first millennium,<sup>99</sup> yet overall poses of the statues did not stray outside the traditional range. The rigidity of stance and form that the statues display was ideally suited to the hard stones from which they were made. Although a few later figures such as the statues of Panemerit and Pikhaâs from Tanis are modelled more freely,<sup>100</sup> indigenous private sculpture was characterised to the end primarily by this stylisation, whether executed in hard or softer stones (see Figs 2.22 a, b, 2.23, 2.24 a, b, 2.25). Thus, temple statuary from the Ptolemaic and Roman periods retains a distinctive Egyptian silhouette.

These conventions are used alongside elaborate hieroglyphic inscriptions, most especially on back pillars (see Fig. 2.16 b). The use of hieroglyphs, whose indigenous cultural identity is self-evident, expresses the cultural continuity of the priestly elite particularly strongly by “speaking” Egyptian, which proclaims their indigenous cultural

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<sup>95</sup> Schäfer 1986, 324.

<sup>96</sup> Bianchi 1988, 84, cat. no. 2.

<sup>97</sup> Bothmer et al. 1969, 52-53, cat. no. 45.

<sup>98</sup> Bothmer et al. 1969, xxxvi-xxxvii; Bianchi 1988, 123-24, 244-45, cat. nos 29, 133; Warda 2011, vol. 1, 71-75.

<sup>99</sup> Bianchi 1988, 128, cat. no. 33.

<sup>100</sup> Bothmer et al. 1969, xxxiv; Zivie-Coche 2001a, 365-73; 2001b, 441-50.

character clearly. The arrangement of the statues in rows with their backs to the walls would have rendered their inscribed back pillars all but invisible to their typical viewers. Moreover, of those who might have seen the inscriptions only members of the priestly elite were likely able to decipher the text.<sup>101</sup> Demotic and Greek, which would have been understood by many more people, were used only rarely.<sup>102</sup> From this singularity, Bothmer asserted that the inscriptions must have been primarily intended to fulfill some sacred function instead, such as being read by the deity.<sup>103</sup> In the physical world, however, the existence of such inscriptions indicates that the priests continued to represent themselves according to the traditions of their civilization. This considered adherence to traditional culture displayed by poses of temple statuary and their hieroglyphic inscriptions complements the cultural vitality demonstrated in the flourishing of hieroglyphic texts on the walls of the temples.

However, the value of statue bodies for revealing the inclinations that lie behind the group as a whole is limited because bodies often exhibit different influences from those identifiable in the modelling of heads and facial features. The latter provide some of the most telling indications of cultural influences, including some critical departures from indigenous artistic convention that are particularly valuable to examine.

Many significant heads are separated from their bodies, to the extent that a sizeable percentage of private hard-stone images from the Late and Ptolemaic periods consists of bodiless heads (see Figs 2.8, 2.9, 2.10). One of the most common characteristics of this group is the lack of sculpted hair. In Egyptian statuary baldness or a shaved head can indicate several aspects, including age and associated wisdom on the one hand, or the hairlessness of an infant symbolising rebirth and youthfulness in eternal life on the other hand.<sup>104</sup> Bald heads are found on a range of statues from aged men with lined faces (see Fig. 2.8) to ideal images with smooth, ageless features (see Fig. 2.7). However, the attribute is most closely linked to the priestly elite for whom it displayed

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<sup>101</sup> Moyer 2011, 31.

<sup>102</sup> Warda 2011, 128-31.

<sup>103</sup> Bothmer et al. 1969, 52-53, cat. no. 45.

<sup>104</sup> Wood 1987, 125; Bothmer and de Meulenaere 1985, 10-11.

the requirement of ritual purity, involving abstentions from impure activities, avoiding garments derived from animal products, undergoing circumcision, and removing all bodily hair.<sup>105</sup> Some statues identified as priests are depicted with hair or a wig (see Fig. 2.18 a, b), but baldness is a primary indication of priestly status and perhaps its most distinctive attribute.

While it is often accurate to infer priestly status from a lack of hair, sculpted bald heads lack the support of a bulky carved wig at the neck and so were relatively easily broken off.<sup>106</sup> Thus, although the traditional form and pose of temple statue bodies is significant in itself, this group cannot be evaluated fully by considerations of stance alone. It must be considered separately how far the execution of the oft-separated statue heads complements the points derived from statue bodies.

The vast majority of Egyptian sculpture is characterised by a standard treatment of the human face that is instantly distinguishable from images in the classical tradition. As with bodies, indigenous heads are presented frontally and follow well-defined rules of composition along axial planes.<sup>107</sup> Faces are modeled strongly with often sharply outlined, large but narrow eyes, and are mostly youthful and idealising, often without significant individualising attributes.<sup>108</sup> By ignoring the effects of age, the general absence of lines and sagging on the face and overall idealisation evokes notions of imperviousness to decay.<sup>109</sup> The frequent lack of differentiation among images of individuals has been seen as effectively representing the person in a social role, emphasising their place within society as opposed to memorialising their own characteristics.<sup>110</sup> Instead of valuing individualising features, the statue's biographical inscription seems to have been deemed sufficient to identify its owner, an approach very different from that seen in classical honorific sculpture.<sup>111</sup> The faces of many statues

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<sup>105</sup> See Gee 1998, 284, table 7.2; Sauneron 2000, 36-37; Warda 2011, vol. 1, 88-89.

<sup>106</sup> Bothmer et al. 1969, 65-66, cat. no. 56.

<sup>107</sup> See Schäfer 1986, 310-34.

<sup>108</sup> Robins 2008, 19, 101 fig. 107.

<sup>109</sup> Robins 2001, 44-52.

<sup>110</sup> Baines 2007, 224-25.

<sup>111</sup> See Ma 2013, 15-17, 278.

from the Ptolemaic and Roman periods, however, departed from these conventions considerably. The nature of this development is a telling factor, particularly among the social group to which it was confined.

After the conquest of Alexander the Great, rulers of Egypt continued to be represented in indigenous style in temple reliefs (e.g. Fig. 2.3), and in many three-dimensional images (e.g. Fig. 2.4). Yet, in many contexts, especially at the capital Alexandria, their representations are Hellenistic in character. Many royal images are classical marble portraits (e.g. Fig. 2.5 a, b), while others in traditional Egyptian hard stone combine an indigenous pose with a Hellenising execution of face and hair (e.g. Fig. 2.6 a, b).<sup>112</sup> Statuary from the coastal region—such as several figures of Ptolemaic queens recently discovered at Thonis-Heracleion, Alexandria, and Canopus—demonstrates a growing tendency to fuse classical and indigenous styles; while early images remain largely unmixed, later examples increasingly display classical or Egyptianising influences.<sup>113</sup> However, the continued polarisation observed throughout the rest of Egypt indicates that the rulers embraced Egyptian-style representations of themselves in certain contexts for many of the same reasons as led them to support the construction of indigenous temples: political concern to back local traditions and legitimise their rule in native terms. Instead of exhibiting a comparable diplomatic strategy of adopting the culture of the foreign group, indigenous non-royal sculpture followed a very different path. The character and evolution of private temple statuary from before the Ptolemaic period through to the Roman period reveals a group of people secure in their cultural identity who selectively appropriated elements of foreign style and incorporated them confidently into their own art without diluting its authenticity.

Certain examples, such as a schist head from the Karnak Cachette depicting Wesirwer, a priest of Montu from Dynasty 30 (ca. 380-340 BCE), are primarily idealising in the traditional way (Fig. 2.7).<sup>114</sup> By the time this head was sculpted, however, one of the most significant characteristics of late Egyptian statuary had

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<sup>112</sup> See Kyrieleis 2005, 241-42; Stanwick 2005, 245-47.

<sup>113</sup> Albersmeier 2010, 191, figs 16.1, 16.7-9.

<sup>114</sup> Bothmer et al. 1969, xxxviii; Tomoum 2005, 194; Perdu and Meffre 2012, 82, cat. no. 25.

emerged, with faces often being depicted with a high level of individuality. People were no longer so routinely shown with young, unblemished visages exuding an air of calm. Instead, features such as wrinkles and sagging skin are emphasised, and subjects frequently appear pensive and careworn. A typical example of this manner is the schist “Portrait of a Wise Man” shown in the 1960-1961 Brooklyn Museum exhibition (Fig. 2.8). Dated by Bothmer to 220-180 BCE (the reigns of Ptolemy IV-V), this man’s tired and venerable expression and stern mouth depart some way from the concept of ideal agelessness. Sculptors of the Ptolemaic period attended to age in a detailed way, to the extent of capturing such individualising attributes as a mole on the left cheek of the schist “Boston Green Head” (c. 220-180 BCE) (Fig. 2.9).

Scholars such as Vandersleyen and Josephson have attributed this heightened realism to the growing influence of Hellenistic art, which emphasised naturalism in a stylized form, as seen in the *contrapposto* stance in contrast to the more artificial rigidity of Egyptian statue poses.<sup>115</sup> According to this interpretation of derivation, the realistic depiction of faces in Egyptian statuary, including traits such as age-lines and individualising characteristics such as moles and scars, should be understood as adopting the naturalism of classical art.<sup>116</sup> Even if motivated primarily by considerations of fashion, perhaps spread through a powerfully influential Alexandrian school of art,<sup>117</sup> this mimicry has been read as showing a shift toward classical culture among both patrons and artists. Writers such as Ashton propose that the indigenous priestly elite were willing to adulterate an ancient sacred art form in a manner not seen in the decoration of Egyptian temples, a move which supposedly shows them surrendering to the influences of the politically dominant culture. In opposition to this, I argue that private temple sculpture displaying these tendencies reflects something very different from a resigned acceptance of foreign stylistic influence.

The notion that the new style is due entirely to a heightened adoption of classical influences can be challenged first. Comparison with contemporary depictions of the

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<sup>115</sup> Vandersleyen 1985, 360; Josephson 1997a, 44.

<sup>116</sup> Ashton 2001, 25.

<sup>117</sup> See Lawrence 1925, 180.

Ptolemies casts doubt on the idea that imperfect features and a more generally non-idealising aspect in private sculpture imitate classical models directly. Although some royal representations display Hellenistic idealism (e.g. Fig. 2.5 a, b), a number of official portraits show these kings as portly and far removed from both the athletic ideal of the ruler in traditional Egyptian art, and the more general ideal human in classical art.<sup>118</sup> This can be seen, for example, in the diorite head identified as Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II, who wears the double crown of Egypt above an obese face that corresponds well with historic accounts of this Ptolemy's enormous size (see Fig. 2.12).<sup>119</sup> If indigenous types were imitating the realism of certain royal portraits, they would have been following an old Egyptian tradition of mimicking the rulers. Private persons in Egypt had long followed the leadership of the royal house in modes of depiction,<sup>120</sup> and local workshops generally assimilated artistic developments from the capital. Thus, even if private statues were imitating classicising royal examples they need not be viewed as adopting classical styles directly.

From another perspective, the conception of these images as 'portraits', that is, more or less realistic depictions of the person commemorated, might reflect the influence of classical naturalism inspiring indigenous sculptors to move away from schematic depictions of an ideal human form to representing the appearance of the person at the time. However, the idea of portraiture is complex and problematic,<sup>121</sup> and it is difficult to classify the appearance of non-idealising features definitively as a naturalistic attempt to capture the subject as he was in life.

Bothmer described the "realism" that characterises Late and Ptolemaic Egyptian sculpture not as true-to-life portraiture but as deriving from the artist's desire to "imbue [his work] with the character and inner life of the subject."<sup>122</sup> Since such a development need not have been driven by outside influence, the Hellenocentric perspective is not

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<sup>118</sup> See Noshy 1937, 119; Kyrieleis 1975, 63-64.

<sup>119</sup> Justin 38.8.

<sup>120</sup> Josephson 1997a, 11.

<sup>121</sup> See e.g. Bianchi 1988, 55; Baines 2007, 224-25.

<sup>122</sup> Bothmer et al. 1969, xxxiii.

immediately helpful. It is thus necessary to consider how the appearance of these images might be explained without assuming foreign influence. I suggest that this trend of non-idealising faces is best understood as an indigenous development.

While the large majority of faces in pharaonic Egyptian art are characterised by conventional expressions and idealising features, as discussed above, depictions of age, physical imperfections, and individualised features appear very early in Egyptian history, and are known from several different periods.<sup>123</sup> The haggard depictions of the 12th Dynasty kings Senwosret III (c. 1836-1818) and Amenemhat III (c. 1818-1770) are a well-known early instance of an Egyptian emphasis on age and a grim, sober countenance (e.g. Fig. 2.13).<sup>124</sup> While these examples would have been considered ancient even by the Ptolemies, such individualising treatment might be seen as paralleled in certain royal portraits depicting the Ptolemaic ruler in a non-ideal form (Fig. 2.12). Traditional artistic conventions portrayed almost all royal bodies as idealised; however, the depiction of an imperfect physique in male officials, representative of their leisured and prosperous life, was a convention in most periods of Egyptian history (see Figs 2.11, 2.14).<sup>125</sup> Due to the length of time that separates these comparanda, it is not clear whether sculptors in later periods may have looked back to Middle Kingdom examples. Yet, the conceptual similarities between these examples make it clear that the non-idealised depictions of faces in Late, Ptolemaic, and Roman private statues were not without indigenous parallels, however ancient. Thus, these images might be seen as taking up a strand of tradition recognisable in indigenous sculpture from a very early period.

Contrary furthermore to the concept of the development of portraiture based on an idealized understanding of classical naturalism, it should be asked whether the indigenous works were meant to be true likenesses of aged men or are schematic depictions of certain qualities. If the latter is the case, marks of age in the faces would symbolise virtues such as wisdom and experience and depict the subject in a particular

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<sup>123</sup> Kaiser 1999, 251.

<sup>124</sup> Robins 2001, 45.

<sup>125</sup> Bianchi 1988, 72, fig. 39; Robins 2001, 46.

stage of life, rather than showing his individual appearance.<sup>126</sup> The commemoration of qualities such as wisdom and age in inscriptions was traditional for the indigenous elite and is mentioned in both contemporary and earlier texts, such as the inscription on the worn statue of Amenhotep son of Hapu who is said to be 80 years of age and hoping to reach 110.<sup>127</sup> Thus, this “realistic” style in Late and Ptolemaic Egyptian sculpture, which existed alongside the regimented conventions of traditional Egyptian sculpture, should be seen as an indigenous phenomenon, with a long-established precedent.

Indigenous Egyptian statuary may have actually influenced the classical artistic tradition in this area, and several scholars have proposed that non-idealising heads of temple statues were the indirect inspiration for the veristic Roman portrait busts of the Late Republic long considered the hallmark of classical realism.<sup>128</sup> Bothmer even calls certain Republican portrait heads “Egyptianizing.”<sup>129</sup> On the other hand, Veronique Dasen draws a parallel between the appearance of facial blemishes in Egyptian and Roman statues with descriptions in Roman literature, suggesting that the depiction of physical flaws reveals the influence of cultural mixing.<sup>130</sup> The complexity of the question shows how problematic it is to assume a dominant Hellenistic influence on Egyptian temple statuary.

Nonetheless, some features of these statues clearly indicate foreign influence. One of the most striking developments of the Ptolemaic and Roman periods is the representation of natural hair, characterised by individually delineated, curling strands and a short, cap-like cut (e.g. Fig. 2.18 b).<sup>131</sup> In contrast to traditional wigs, headdresses, and bald or shaved heads, this innovation has no indigenous antecedent and must be traced instead to the influence of classical sculpture (e.g. Fig. 2.15).<sup>132</sup> Thus, despite the

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<sup>126</sup> Bianchi 1988, 56.

<sup>127</sup> Varille 1968, 6.

<sup>128</sup> See Bothmer et al. 1969, xxxiii; 1988, 408-15; Wood 1987, 125.

<sup>129</sup> Bothmer 1988, 409.

<sup>130</sup> Dasen 2007, 19-26.

<sup>131</sup> Bothmer et al. 1969, 10-11, cat. no. 9.

<sup>132</sup> Ashton 2001, 25; Baines 2004, 52.

fundamentally traditional character of private temple statuary, it clearly did assimilate some elements of foreign style.

However, it should not be inferred from this development that patrons of these statues felt that their traditional culture was out of favour. Temple statues continued to be dominated by Egyptian conventions; just as no statue executed in a classical style is inscribed in hieroglyphs, no known representation of an individual with an indigenous priestly title is purely Hellenistic in character. Thus, the extent to which stylistic influences are combined in these images shows that the indigenous elite had developed new ways of representing their elite status in society as a whole by picking and choosing from the stylistic options available. Elite representations were no longer restricted to a single immutable cultural repertoire; instead, different individuals of the same social status felt free to represent themselves using a variety of different stylistic combinations. This development, particularly in comparison with royal portraits, is a telling indication of the high status of their indigenous priestly patrons, as well as of the culture of which they were the protagonists.

It has been stated above that the Ptolemies and Roman emperors sanctioned largely pharaonic representations of themselves in part as a political strategy to adopt local traditions and legitimise their status. If the indigenous elite were engaging with Hellenistic culture in the opposite direction, like the foreign rulers, it could be argued that they too felt the need to bolster their position within contemporary society and were adopting the tastes of the other culture to this end, even if only displaying these new proclivities to each other. However, differences between the royal and non-royal representational traditions suggest that their motivations were very different. Depictions of the Ptolemies and Roman emperors were clearly tailored for their audience. Representations on Egyptian temple walls wholly followed the indigenous mode while classical style portraits were likely set up in other contexts, with many having been found in Alexandria.<sup>133</sup> By contrast, no fully Hellenistic sculpture commissioned by an identifiable holder of Egyptian priestly office is known from any site. It is therefore

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<sup>133</sup> See e.g. Bianchi 1988, 169-70, 172-73, cat. nos. 65, 67; Josephson 1997a, 41-42.

difficult to explain the stylistic evolution of temple statuary as the adoption of classical modes by indigenous priests looking to cater to a foreign culture. Furthermore, if standardised features emphasise a generalised social position,<sup>134</sup> then the appearance of distinguishing characteristics demonstrates a confident sense of identity among patrons. The staunchly indigenous appearance of these statues, influenced in some ways by Hellenistic modes, suggests therefore that their patrons adhered primarily to indigenous tradition despite accepting certain foreign traits, resulting in a creative evolution in which outside influence played a limited role.

The style of temple statues shows the self-assured cultural identity of the patrons and their confidence in expressing this in a public forum. Decorated with reliefs depicting the foreign rulers as legitimate successors of the pharaohs, the spaces in which the statues were set up were clearly not places where elites felt the need to express traditional identities subversively. It was evidently a normal action for indigenous elites to have such statues. Owners were willing to invest considerable resources to portray themselves deliberately in keeping with indigenous religious culture before a public audience in officially sanctioned spaces. They commissioned statues that would speak to viewers within a social context in which such cultural expression was appreciated and valued.

#### **2.4. Records of Prominent Roles: Continued Influence in a Changing Society**

A crucial indication of status that hard-stone private statuary can provide is found in the inscriptions commemorating the roles played by the individual depicted. Because so many statue heads have been detached from their bodies and back pillars and thus lack inscriptions, the implications of such texts cannot be applied with certainty to all hard-stone private statues. Yet, the value of examining the recorded roles of certain statue owners and commissioners is evident and must be considered. Free-standing hard-stone statuary was produced on the initiative of individual holders of priestly office acting on their own behalf, not for their collective priesthood. While most statue inscriptions confirm the priestly affiliations of the person represented, they often also show that they

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<sup>134</sup> Baines 2007, 224-25.

held other roles, including secular administrative offices, as well as being priests.<sup>135</sup> The complexity of the statue patrons' position in society as revealed by the inscriptions provides information about the cultural identity and assimilation of indigenous religious elites, as well as about their political roles. I discuss a few representative examples here.

The first individual that I consider is Amenpayom (Greek form *Amphiomis*), the owner of two statues that have been dated to the second century BCE (Figs 2.16, 2.17 a, b).<sup>136</sup> The first, a headless diorite statue in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, is a striding draped figure and bears a hieroglyphic inscription along the left side of the lost back pillar identifying him as “the prophet and general [*mr mšʿ*] Amenpayom, the blessed”.<sup>137</sup> He was almost certainly also the owner of a granodiorite torso in the Cleveland Museum, which describes him as “the priest, commander of the (infantry) troops, commander of the chariotry, son of the commander of troops.” This statue's form displays no non-indigenous elements, and the names of Amenpayom's parents are Egyptian, confirming, as far as possible in the mixed context of the time, that he was ethnically Egyptian. The better-preserved Cleveland statue also includes on its back pillar, above the columns of text, a miniature scene of the owner shown shaven-headed and standing before the divine triad of Mendes. The inscriptions give Amenpayom priestly titles that fit his shaven head in the scene; however the title ‘commander of troops’ (*mr mšʿ*) is not a priestly one. Instead, it corresponded at this date to the Greek word *strategos*, originally a military title that had come to denote the chief administrator of a nome.<sup>138</sup> The inscription thus reveals that Amenpayom held a high position of power within the Ptolemaic administrative hierarchy as an indigenous Egyptian, while also having himself depicted as an Egyptian priest and being a leading representative of traditional religious culture.

A second example of such a mixing of roles is recorded by two statues from Qos and Koptos memorializing a man named Senoucheri (BM EA 1668, Cairo CE 1230). The son of a Greek father and Egyptian mother, Senoucheri held a high position in the court

<sup>135</sup> See Guerneur 2000, 69-78; Brissaud and Zivie-Coche 2004, 235-289.

<sup>136</sup> Ranke 1953, 193-98, Bothmer et al. 1969, 122-25, cat. no. 97, pl. 91, figs 242-43.

<sup>137</sup> Warda 2011, vol. 2, 85-90, cat. no. 7.

<sup>138</sup> See e.g. Manning 2012, 178.

of Ptolemy II Philadelphus at Alexandria as well as several priestly titles, and claimed to have played a part in building and restoring indigenous temples.

Le gouverneur, Chancelier du roi de Basse Égypte....Prêtre du lion du sud et du lion du nord, des deux lions enfants de Râ qui résident à Qous, prêtre d'Isis "la Chasse" qui réside dans le nome coptite, prêtre d'Osiris, Isis et Horus, maîtres de Hout Djefaou, intendant de la maison de l'épouse royale du roi....J'ai reconstruit ce que j'ai trouvé en ruine dans ton temple....J'ai fait une grande porte de belle pierre de grès....J'ai construit une digue de brique, ainsi j'ai entouré le temple saint d'un mur de brique....J'ai construit deux chapelles au "bassin du lion du sud et du lion du nord" et entassé offrande sur offrande pour ton temple, pour fair vivre le domaine et tes prêtres horaires.<sup>139</sup>

A third case is the image of Hor, a relatively well-preserved granite statue dated to the first century BCE (Fig. 2.18 a, b).<sup>140</sup> Hor's face is individualised with age-lines combined with a classically-influenced head of short natural hair. The hieroglyphic inscription on the back pillar gives Hor the titles of "general [*mr mšꜥ*] of Lower Egypt, the nobleman, the great [one] of the people, the priest of Neith, the great, mother of the God, Hor the son of Tutu..."<sup>141</sup> These three statues are not isolated cases, and many figures from this time, including a sarcophagus of an Egyptian priest with the Greek name Dioskourides, bear comparable inscriptions.<sup>142</sup> It is difficult to know to what extent the person depicted identified with one set of titles or the other, and in some cases priestly titles may have been more honorific than functional. Nonetheless, it is apparent that these individuals occupied prominent positions in the Ptolemaic administration and in indigenous religious culture, and displayed both aspects of their identity in the inscription on their statues in largely indigenous style.

It is not clear from the inscriptions of their statues whether some individuals holding both administrative posts and priestly office simultaneously may have perceived tension between their governmental offices and sacred titles. However, that there was a clear conceptual separation between the indigenous elite and the foreign administration is

<sup>139</sup> Derchain 2000, 22-31, 44-53.

<sup>140</sup> Bianchi 1988, 25, cat. 31; Lembke and Vittmann 1999, 299-306; Warda 2011, vol. 2, 57-68, cat. no. 5.

<sup>141</sup> Warda 2011, vol. 2, 62-68, cat. no. 5.

<sup>142</sup> See e.g. Derchain 1989, 82-89; Collombert 2000, 57; Guermeur 2000, 77-78; Coulon 2001, 97-103.

shown by the funerary biography of Psherenptah III (90/89-42/41 BCE), high priest of Ptah in Memphis from the reign of Ptolemy X Alexander I through that of Cleopatra VII Philopator, on his stela (BM stela 886).<sup>143</sup> Psherenptah emphasises his direct interaction with the ruler, stating that: “When the king reached Memphis, on every occasion when he travelled south or travelled north to inspect the Two Lands – when he stopped (?) at the .... of Ankhtawy (?), he went to my temple together with his officials and his wives and royal children and all his possessions, resting at his leisure.” He goes on to state: “[I] went to the Residence of the Aegean [*h3w-nbw*] kings, which is on the shore of the Great Green on the west side of the *q3*-district, the name of which is Raqote [Alexandria].”<sup>144</sup>

This sentence supports the sentiment of the rest of the stela text in emphasising the close relations between the ruling house and the Memphite priesthood, even mentioning a personal relationship between Psherenptah and Ptolemy XII Auletes. However, by referring to the ruling dynasty as “the Aegean kings” and using the Egyptian name for Alexandria, the wording of this insists upon the cultural difference between the the royal family and priest addressing the reader. This text indicates that, even at the end of the Ptolemaic Dynasty, the foreign origins of the rulers not only were remembered but remained a primary distinguishing factor.

As the high priest of Ptah at Memphis, representing the main temple of the ancient capital of Egypt and one of the most preeminent and archetypal institutions of indigenous religion, Psherenptah might have identified with indigenous culture in a particularly traditional way, while members of the indigenous elite elsewhere in the country could have held much more diverse views. A more inclusive sense of identity might be seen in statues inscribed in Greek as well as hieroglyphs and Demotic, such as the limestone figure of Asychis (included in this study of hard-stone statues because of its significance with regard to the changing art form) that bears both a hieroglyphic inscription on a traditional back pillar and an inscription in Greek along the front of the statue base (Figs 2.25, 2.26). Nevertheless, it is important to note that, in all the statues

<sup>143</sup> Walker and Higgs 2001, 184-86, fig. 192; Perdu and Meffre 2012, 137, cat. no. 55.

<sup>144</sup> Translation by Baines 2014, personal communication.

whose collective inscriptions attribute both a priestly and administrative role to the subject, priestly titles are restricted to hieroglyphic and (a very few) Demotic texts and never mentioned in the Greek.<sup>145</sup>

This pattern shows the clear cultural divide between the different roles open to the indigenous elite, which they often held concurrently. The proud and politically aware biography of Psherenptah shows that even when these social spheres were most sharply contrasted, indigenous identity was not disadvantaged by the difference. The temple statues of Amenpayom, Senoucheri, and Hor considered above, only three of many examples, show that holders of indigenous priestly office could actively participate in the central administration, while possessing sufficient wealth to commission statues and the cultural confidence to proclaim their status in an indigenous form.<sup>146</sup>

## **2.5. Chronology of Production: Evidence of Economic Privilege and Decline**

The question that remains to be asked is: how long did the privileged circumstances of the indigenous priestly elite last? Here, it is necessary to look at the chronology of the evidence considered. While some genres and examples of material culture, such as coins and commemorative stelae, can be assigned precisely to the year, the private statuary of the Late and Ptolemaic periods in particular is notoriously difficult to date. In contrast to earlier times, inscriptions on these statues have a more local focus and few can be dated by mentions of specific rulers.<sup>147</sup> Bothmer surmised that the lack of royal names in these later texts is linked to a hypothetical distancing of the clergy from the ruling administration by priests who no longer felt so closely linked to their rulers;<sup>148</sup> however, the reasons for this shift must have been more complex. It is not possible to investigate dating in detail here, but broad outlines of chronological development in statuary can be used for the present discussion. Areas of academic consensus that have been reached are most useful to assess the significance of the art form's development to

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<sup>145</sup> Warda 2011, 113.

<sup>146</sup> Baines 2004, 55.

<sup>147</sup> Bothmer et al. 1969, 127-28, cat. no. 99; Warda 2011, vol. 1, 119-18.

<sup>148</sup> Bothmer et al. 1969, 127-28, cat. no. 99.

the issue at hand. In particular, the continued and stylistically dynamic production of hard-stone temple statuary under the Ptolemies contrasts starkly with the decline and virtual disappearance of this form after the Roman conquest. This indicates a significant change in the circumstances of the patrons.

Private free-standing statuary in pharaonic Egyptian art is a heavily studied field, but the progression of the art form during the Ptolemaic and Roman periods is less well understood. The genre of free-standing, hard-stone non-royal sculpture within these general boundaries ranges from the kneeling steatite statue of Wesir-Nakht, a priest of Horus around the time of the conquest of Egypt by Alexander the Great,<sup>149</sup> to a final group of basalt statues from the Fayyum, such as the “seated dignitary”, which have been dated to the early Roman period (Figs 2.19 a, b, 2.20 a, b.).<sup>150</sup> Types such as the block statue originally introduced in the Middle Kingdom,<sup>151</sup> and the older standing image, were developed by Late Period sculptors with a new focus, and scholars have approached this development in various ways. General consensus is that the shape of the back pillar, an almost invariable feature of standing statues, is one of the most reliable indicators of date within this group.<sup>152</sup> Throughout much of the pharaonic period, the back pillar ended at the nape of the figure in a simple, squared off terminus. In the Late Period this evolved into various shapes, notably a trapezoid with the pillar still terminating in a flat plane, but reaching this with inwardly sloping sides.<sup>153</sup> This continued until the fourth century BCE, when the pillar was capped by first an isosceles and then equilateral triangle.

Bianchi devised a detailed system of typologies based on the shape of sculpted heads, with which he attempted to organise the evidence as a whole, and date the examples more precisely. He defined several categories and subcategories of “portrait” types, including idealising and non-idealising examples, and those defined by the shape of the cranium: “egg-heads”, “figure-eight” heads, and “polygonal” heads. The

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<sup>149</sup> Bothmer et al. 1969, 114-16, cat. no. 91.

<sup>150</sup> Thomas 2000, 40.

<sup>151</sup> Bianchi 1988, 34-35, cat. no. 29; Bianchi 1992, 20-21; Lembke 1998, 293-94.

<sup>152</sup> Bothmer et al. 1969, xxxiv; Warda 2011, vol. 1, 64-66.

<sup>153</sup> Bothmer et al. 1969, xxxvii.

chronology that Bianchi created, unlike those of earlier scholars, does not presume the influence of Hellenistic art upon the indigenous tradition. By omitting this assumption from his analyses, he produced a timeline suggesting the opposite scenario.<sup>154</sup>

Werner Kaiser follows both Bianchi and Bothmer in analysing the body of evidence as a whole for typological comparisons with which to establish a general system of dating the statues.<sup>155</sup> Although it is not altogether clear whether such markers are best understood as chronological indicators or as artistic variations, scholars agree in placing almost all hard-stone temple statues before the fall of the Ptolemies and concur that the production of hard-stone statuary “very rapidly” declined after the Roman conquest of Egypt in 30 BCE. The group of small basalt statues from the first century CE noted above, most of which were found at Dime (Soknopaiou Nesos) and which retain Egyptian forms despite bearing non-indigenous names, appear to be the very last hard stone statues ascribable to indigenous culture.<sup>156</sup> Thus, the arrival of the Romans indicated the imminent end of the art form altogether.<sup>157</sup>

Josephson has compared the drop-off in statuary after the Roman conquest to the drop-off of indigenous artistic expression observable during Persian times, and the connection between an unsupportive regime and cultural decline is evident.<sup>158</sup> Such a waning might be part of a more general decline of the culture that produced them, resulting from suffocation either by foreign influence or official opposition. However, Egypt had been under the control of a foreign administration for three hundred years before the Roman conquest and indigenous statues had continued to be produced according to indigenous tradition. Likewise, the idea of official opposition to indigenous culture is contradicted by the continued production of private temple sculpture on a certain level for a time after the coming of the Romans. The nature of this continuation, however, is vital to understanding how these statues reflect the status of indigenous religious culture.

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<sup>154</sup> Bianchi 1988, 57-61.

<sup>155</sup> Kaiser 1999.

<sup>156</sup> Bianchi 1992, 23-26, e.g. pl. 3.12; Lembke 1998, 291-92, figs 2-3.

<sup>157</sup> Bothmer et al. 1969, 172-73, cat. no. 132.

<sup>158</sup> Josephson 1997b, 10.

The few statues of comparable quality and character dated after the Roman conquest are almost entirely restricted to the early years of Roman rule. Furthermore, while pre-Roman period statues are executed in hard stone with very few exceptions, almost all figures dated after the Roman conquest are made from soft stone. For example, the statue of Asychis from Tanis examined above, assigned the relatively late date of the second century CE, is executed in an indigenous style, with clearly Egyptian-style eyes and a bald priestly head (Figs 2.24 a, b, 2.25).<sup>159</sup> However, the statue is made of limestone and its workmanship is of poor quality. It is paralleled by two anonymous statues of the first century CE or later (one from the Karnak Cachette; the other of unknown provenance) (Figs 2.22 a, b, 2.23).<sup>160</sup> The first of these has lost its head, but the second clearly combines a Hellenic hairstyle with a fully Egyptian pose, a combination described above as indicating the cultural confidence of the statue's commissioner. All three of these images are sculpted in the predominantly indigenous style discussed above, striding forward with a crossed arm and supported by a back pillar. However, they are all executed rather badly in limestone.

The Upper Egyptian provenances of the Karnak statue and that of Asychis favoured their survival. Many more soft stone figures from the early Roman period may have been lost in the Delta. Yet while this may explain in part the low numbers of statues from this period in general, the sudden drop in numbers of hard-stone counterparts from this time suggests that the art may have switched to a different medium. That statues continued to be produced in the traditional form, and possibly in similar quantities for a time, indicates that this shift was not due to a change in the cultural affiliation of those commissioning the statues. Instead, the decline in quality of workmanship, alongside the increased ratio of statues in softer, less expensive media, suggests the existence of fewer qualified sculptors and implies that the disappearance of the traditional hard-stone statues was directly linked to a decline in the resources that funded their production.

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<sup>159</sup> Warda 2011, vol. 2, 112-19, cat. no. 11.

<sup>160</sup> Warda 2011, vol. 2, 316-24, 345-49, cat. nos 29, 33.

Furthermore, the continued activity of hard stone quarries in the Eastern Desert, such as those at Mons Claudianus and Mons Porphyrites, which supplied the Roman world with copious quantities of granodiorite and porphyry respectively, prove that the shift was not due to a dearth of suitable material in the country.<sup>161</sup> Indigenous temples sat at the head of several important caravan trade routes through which quarry products would have passed,<sup>162</sup> and the priests of these temples originally exercised a certain amount of economic control over these materials as well as enjoying a heightened ease of access to them. However, Trajan's renovation and expansion of an earlier canal linking the Nile and the Red Sea in the early second century CE decreased the importance of these routes, and likely restricted the economic power and regional authority of the indigenous elites at the same time.<sup>163</sup>

It has already been observed that hard-stone private statuary represented a significant investment on the part of the commissioners, and that their production indicated the prosperity of the group who propelled the art form. Accordingly, if the form is seen to decline in the absence of identifiable factors undermining its original agenda, the cessation must be due to a change in the circumstances of its creation, as opposed to its conception or reception. A change of material strongly indicates a change in the economic circumstances of the commissioners. The disappearance of finely worked examples suggests similarly that fewer resources were being invested in the art form. Thus, the decline in hard-stone private portraiture in Egypt after the Roman conquest appears to be due directly to the impoverishment of its patrons – individuals holding membership in the indigenous priesthoods. Because of this impoverishment, the genre may have moved for a time to less demanding media such as limestone, many examples of which later would have been destroyed or burned for lime, leaving just a few from Upper Egypt, including the Karnak statue and that of Asychis discussed above, to round off the record. This minor continuation demonstrates the continued cultural vitality of the tradition behind its production, despite a loss of resources.

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<sup>161</sup> Bagnall and Rathbone 2004, 285-88.

<sup>162</sup> Coppens and Preys 2000, 110.

<sup>163</sup> Bowman 1996, 20, 40.

## **2.6. Indigenous Hard-Stone Statuary: Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have examined the production of traditional hard-stone statuary depicting individual members of the priestly elite as a genre of evidence representing the activity of that group, and displaying their cultural preferences and status. Comparable developments are found in other cultural areas, such as biographical inscriptions in general and indigenous burial arrangements. However, the body of evidence considered here has been chosen specifically as an extensive group of singular significance for the question of this thesis, illuminating the situation from the perspective of the persons directly representing indigenous culture, particularly its religious aspects.

Well-executed private statuary in the costly and artistically challenging medium of hard stone was clearly an exclusive form that must have been commissioned by the economically well-off. In this sense, they would have functioned as status symbols and displays of conspicuous consumption for their commissioners whose social positions would have been highlighted by the figures' inscriptions. The subjects of surviving non-royal examples and the contexts in which these examples have been found demonstrate that the vast majority of examples were commissioned by individuals holding priestly titles. Their original temple setting and the conspicuous choice of medium indicate that their patrons were deliberately representing themselves as Egyptian priests in a public arena. The abundance of earlier statues set up in the same spaces as these later ones necessarily shows that their patrons were knowingly continuing a long-established indigenous tradition. Therefore, it is clear that indigenous priests during the Ptolemaic period consciously perpetuated inherited forms under the eye of the regime and therefore must have enjoyed a sense of security about their place in society.

It is also apparent from the developing traditional indigenous style of the statues, including the sparing introduction of some classical features, that their commissioners adhered to Egyptian culture with a confidence that permitted innovation. Furthermore, the inscriptions on the statues show that, even as the priests identified themselves with their predecessors, perpetuated an indigenous form, and displayed their enduring traditions before their peers, the priests engaged actively with the ruling powers by

exercising administrative offices as well as carrying out priestly duties. This indicates that, far from being socially disenfranchised, the priests continued to enjoy a high level of social status during the centuries in which these statues were produced.

The sharp decline in, and eventual cessation of, hard-stone statue production during the Roman period, despite the apparent continued production of limestone images, supports the thesis of the previous chapter by indicating that holders of indigenous priestly office, the primary patrons of this form, largely lost the resources with which they had previously commissioned these statues. Yet, considerations of style, and the fact that statues continued to be produced according to traditional modes even as they declined in quality, quantity, and value of material, show that the deprivation of the Egyptian elite did not extend to the cultural sphere.

The material evidence of the Ptolemaic and Roman periods in Egypt, including patterns of sacred and civic monumental construction, and the production of hard-stone private sculpture, indicate on the one hand that the Roman administration largely deprived indigenous religious culture, as represented by its institutional structures and its living representatives, of the elevated economic status that they had maintained throughout the Ptolemaic dynasty. On the other hand, the character of hard-stone temple statuary is a significant indicator that indigenous religious culture, as an ancient and widely esteemed religion, retained the respect of both the administration and society in general during the period of their production.

The private hard-stone statues considered here reflect both the investment of resources in their creation and the cultural confidence with which they were commissioned. The pattern of disappearance of the art form shows that these factors waned at different speeds and in different ways. I argue that the disappearance of hard-stone statuary is symptomatic of a decline in resources, not a decline in cultural status. In the next chapter, the sense of cultural relevance and security that characterised these images is shown to have survived beyond their disappearance, no longer manifest in this form but visible in other material evidence.

## CHAPTER 3

### Traditional Religious Elements in Alexandrian Funerary Spaces: Private Expressions of Reverence

#### 3.1. Introduction

Private, individual expressions provide some of the most direct reflections of everyday social realities. Having examined the activity of individual indigenous elites in the medium of hard-stone statuary, it is next necessary to assess the personal inclinations of Egypt's elite Hellenised and Hellenic population in order to determine the attitudes of the dominant group toward traditional religion. Evidence of this group centres on the administrative capital of the country, Alexandria, where the most well-preserved remains are its tombs. Carved deep beneath the city, these have, in several notable locations, escaped the generations of urban development that obliterated most other traces of the ancient metropolis. Alexandrian tombs are thus some of the most informative surviving spaces for the Hellenised population in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt, and must be examined.

In this chapter, traditional Egyptian religious elements in the Ptolemaic and Roman tombs of Alexandria are examined as revealing the attitude of the city's elite toward Egyptian religion throughout these periods and thus throwing another light on the status of indigenous religious culture during this time. Pagan religious practices throughout the Mediterranean in the Hellenistic and Roman periods were flexible in their acceptance of new ideas, and the multicultural hub of Alexandria seems particularly unlikely to display adherence to any single monolithic religious tradition. Nevertheless, the extent to which the Alexandrian elite chose to incorporate elements of different religions and the contexts in which they did so are significant.

In their simplest form, classical Greek and Roman concepts of death hinged on the concept of the annihilation of the deceased, and notions of an afterlife are only

vaguely alluded to in funerary contexts informed by this outlook.<sup>1</sup> In stark contrast, Egyptian religion provided an elaborate and long-established concept of life after death, which dictated every aspect of the treatment of the deceased's body and final resting-place. Therefore, tomb environments in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt offer a revealing perspective on the cultural predilections of the past population. I argue that references to traditional religion used with apparent reverence and high regard in the tombs of the Alexandrian ruling elite show that indigenous religion was not only treated with respect and admiration, but also partially adopted by the upper classes in Roman as well as Ptolemaic times, confirming the continued high social status of indigenous religious culture.

### *Types of Evidence*

In this chapter I focus on monumental Alexandrian tombs and their decoration, including architectural features, wall paintings, and sculptural elements that are part of the tombs' fabric. The poor survival of items such as individual coffins (the only evidence for which are some remnants of cartonnage at Kom el-Shuqafa), mummies (a single example noted by Botti at Gabbari crumbled into dust upon discovery), mummy masks (almost all surviving examples of which come from the Fayyum), and small finds at Alexandria does not allow these to be studied as extensively as such evidence from the rest of Egypt has been.<sup>2</sup> Although I consider the banks of loculi – stacked rows of individual stone burial units– where Alexandrians of more modest means were interred, in this chapter I concentrate primarily on large-scale monumental tombs that would have been commissioned by the wealthy urban, Hellenised elite and in certain cases contained loculi as well. With regard to the relationship between the empowered Hellenised demographic and indigenous Egyptian culture, observation of the practices of the Alexandrian elite provides invaluable information as to how highly indigenous culture was esteemed by the ruling Hellenised stratum in the capital.

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<sup>1</sup> Toynbee 1971, 33-39; Mikalson 2011, 177-84.

<sup>2</sup> See Rowe 1942, 29; Walker and Bierbrier 1997, 17; Empereur 2001, 6, 19, fig. 1.21; Venit 2002b, 165, n. 1065; Schmidt 2003, 35.

### *Archaeological Evidence*<sup>3</sup>

That the urban area of Alexandria once held far more tombs than can be accounted for today is clear not only from historical records of widespread necropoleis,<sup>4</sup> but also from the frequency with which modern construction projects encounter ancient funerary architecture. The earliest graves were mostly located to the east of the city, but the necropoleis later shifted to the west, although people continued to be buried in both sectors (see Figs 3.1 a, b). We have detailed knowledge of only a few examples of these burials and, of those, fewer still can be visited today for first-hand examination. I describe these briefly, moving from west to east across the city regardless of date.

The vast number of burials that once composed the necropolis in the west of Alexandria is now represented by only two accessible sites, Kom el-Shuqafa and Anfushy. The Main Tomb of Kom el-Shuqafa,<sup>5</sup> located south-west of the Serapeum, is perhaps the most architecturally and iconographically significant Roman period complex in the city. Dated to the first century CE by the Flavian portrait statues found inside (69-78 CE),<sup>6</sup> the hypogeum is reached by a monumental spiral stairwell and comprises an extensive complex of loculi, individual burial chambers, and related spaces, including a banqueting hall (see Figs 3.16 a, b). A passage cut through the tomb wall by grave robbers connects the main tomb to an adjacent complex known as the Hall of Caracalla, likewise dated to the Roman period (1st-3rd century CE), which is lined with niches containing sarcophagi, as well as loculi (see Fig. 3.2).<sup>7</sup>

Two additional tomb structures are located on the grounds of the Kom el-Shuqafa site, having been removed from their findspots elsewhere in the city. The larger of these, known as the Tigrane Tomb from the street where it was discovered in the east of the city, consists of a small central chamber with three niches on each side containing

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<sup>3</sup> For an extensive bibliography on each tomb, see Venit 2002b, Appendix A (191-200).

<sup>4</sup> E.g. Strabo 17.1.10.

<sup>5</sup> Sieglin and Schreiber 1908, 77-120; Rowe 1942, 3-45; Adriani 1966, 170; Fedak 1990, 29; Venit 2002b, 124-45, 199.

<sup>6</sup> Venit 2002b, 129.

<sup>7</sup> Sieglin and Schreiber 1908, 128-32; Adriani 1966, 179-80, Guimier-Sorbets 1999; Guimier-Sorbets and Seif el-Din 1997; 2001b; Venit 2002b, 122-23, 199.

sarcophagi, accessed from a short entrance hall (see Figs 3.51, 3.52, 3.53).<sup>8</sup> It has been dated to the Hadrianic period (117-138 CE) by virtue of its shallowly domed ceiling painted to resemble a cross-groined vault described by Venit as architectonic.<sup>9</sup> The second, smaller tomb, referred to as the Stagni Tomb (see Fig. 3.3),<sup>10</sup> is dated to the second-first centuries BCE from its similarities to other, more precisely dated Ptolemaic models.<sup>11</sup> Only part of it has been preserved, including a small niche containing a sarcophagus, together with parts of the outer pediment. Both the Tigrane and Stagni tombs retain significant elements of relief and/or wall-painting, as do several notable areas of the Kom el-Shuqafa main tomb and the Hall of Caracalla. The Stagni Tomb was brought to the Kom el-Shuqafa archaeological park from Gabbari, a significant necropolis in the west of the city that has been studied and published to a greater extent than any of the other Alexandrian necropoleis.<sup>12</sup> Composed of less elite burials and chambers of loculi, the necropolis largely falls outside the scope of the monumental tombs considered here; however, work on the site has yielded significant insights into the socio-cultural backdrop against which Alexandria's monumental tombs were constructed.

Anfushy is an archaeological park on the former Pharos Island, with five separate burial complexes<sup>13</sup> dated from the mid-second to the mid-first centuries BCE by virtue of certain similarities with the hypogea at Shatby which are earlier.<sup>14</sup> These are monumental hypogea comparable to the later main tomb at Kom el-Shuqafa, consisting of elongated burial units arranged around an open court that is accessed from above by a stairwell (see e.g. Tomb 2: Fig. 3.4). As at Kom el-Shuqafa and in the Hall of Caracalla, the Anfushy

<sup>8</sup> Adriani 1956, 62-86; 1966, 145-46; Kaplan 1999, 142-44; Venit 1997, 701-29; Venit 2002b, 146-59, 196; McKenzie 2007, 193.

<sup>9</sup> Venit 2002b, 147.

<sup>10</sup> Abd el-Fattah and Choukri 1998, 39-41; Kaplan 1999, 148-49; Venit 2002b, 197.

<sup>11</sup> Venit 2002b, 123.

<sup>12</sup> See especially Empereur and Nenna 2001; 2003; Venit 2002b, 196-97, 2004, 551-52.

<sup>13</sup> Botti 1902a, b; Breccia 1921. Tomb 1: Breccia 1914b, 111-20; 1922, 329-34; Adriani 1952, 56-61, figs 29-31; Venit 2002b, 74-77, figs 57-59; Greve 2014, 189-90, cat. no. A01; Tomb 2: Adriani 1952, 61-80, figs 32-44, pls 36-37; Venit 2002b, 77-85, figs 60-69; Greve 2014, 190-92, cat. no. A02; Tomb 3: Adriani 1952, 80-85, figs 45-48; Venit 2002b, 85-90, figs 70-75; Greve 2014, 192-93, cat. no. A03; Tomb 4: Adriani 1952, 86-87, fig. 49; Venit 2002b, 85-90, figs 70-75; Greve 2014, 193-94, cat. no. A04; Tomb 5: Adriani 1952, 87-97, figs 50-55; Venit 2002b, 85-90, figs 70-75; Greve 2014, 194-95, cat. no. A05. Venit labels these as Tombs I-V (Venit 2002b, 23-90, 199-200).

<sup>14</sup> Venit 2002b, 73-90.

tombs are decorated intermittently, with some rooms displaying elaborate wall-paintings and architectural embellishments and others being comparatively plain (see Figs 3.19, 3.20, 3.21, 3.22, 3.30, 3.31).

The great expanse of gravesites that once existed to the east of the city can be encountered at just three locations preserved because of the monumental tombs found there. Of these, the structure known as the Alabaster Tomb is located more centrally than the others, and likely lay within the city walls at the time of its construction.<sup>15</sup> Located within a large modern garden complex, it is constructed of enormous slabs of unornamented alabaster, and originally had the form of a long, narrow chamber covered by a tumulus similar to earlier Macedonian examples.<sup>16</sup> It is dated to the Ptolemaic period by virtue of its Hellenistic door frame.<sup>17</sup>

To the northeast of the Alabaster Tomb, the archaeological park at Shatby preserves a chamber with loculi and the remains of a large hypogeum dated from the late fourth to the early third century BCE from the Hadra vases it contained.<sup>18</sup> The hypogeum, the earliest example of this type that survives, is largely submerged in seawater. The ornamental architectural elements of the tomb, such as façades and *klinai*, remain discernible above the present water level; however, the damp has destroyed all visible signs of wall-painting. The tomb's original appearance can be imagined by viewing photographs taken at the time of its excavation in the early twentieth century, when traces of paint could still be seen (see Fig. 3.5).

The final remaining accessible area in the eastern necropolis is the Ptolemaic Mustapha Pasha burial complex,<sup>19</sup> where four separate tombs are now open to visitors.

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<sup>15</sup> Breccia 1912; 1914b, 88; Adriani 1966, 141-43, no. 89, 242-45; Venit 2002b, 191; McKenzie 2007, 28.

<sup>16</sup> Adriani 1940, 15-23; Tkaczow 1993, 164-65 site 130; Venit 2002b, 14; McKenzie 2007, 74.

<sup>17</sup> Adriani 1940, 21 n. 102; McKenzie 1990, 65.

<sup>18</sup> Breccia 1912; Pagenstecher 1919, 2, 105-12; Adriani 1966, 124-26, no. 79; McKenzie 1990, 63-64; Tkaczow 1993, 168-69, site 135; Venit 2002b, 30-32, 192-93; Greve 2014, 201-02, cat. no. A13.

<sup>19</sup> Brown 1957, 52-53, cat. no. 34; Fedak 1990, 130-32; Tkaczow 1993, 173-74, site 142; Nielsem 1994, 20; Grimm 1998, 88-89; Venit 2002b, 194-95. Tomb 1: Brown 1957, 55-57; Adriani 1966, 130-34 no. 84, pls 48-51; Lyttelton 1974, 42-45; McKenzie 1990, 64-65, pl. 176-9; 2007, 71-73, figs 106-07; Grimm 1998, 41, fig. 39; Venit 2002b, 50-61, figs 35-36, 38-45, 194-95; Greve 2014, 204-07, cat. no. A17; Tomb 2: Adriani 1966, 134-35 no. 85, pl. 52-53; McKenzie 1990, 64-65, pl 180; 2007, 71;

Three of these consist of burial chambers arranged around a peristyle court open to the sky. A fourth takes the unique form of a theatre setting, with a stage-like raised platform at the north end of an open court. Each tomb retains at least some elements of decoration, including painting, architectural elements, and some free-standing sculpture (see Figs 3.25, 3.26, 3.29).

### *Documentary Evidence*

As with the paintings at Shatby, the body of surviving source material surveyed above is augmented by the preservation in museums and recording of many elements of funerary décor from tombs which are no longer extant. Alexandrian tombs are often uncovered in the course of modern construction projects, leading to emergency excavations. This has resulted in not only the relocation of entire burial chambers to alternative locations, as with the Tigrane and Stagni tombs at the Kom el-Shuqafa archaeological park, but also in the removal of wall panels for conservation and display elsewhere. One of the best-known of these vanished funerary spaces is the Saqiya Tomb<sup>20</sup> discovered in the necropolis of the western Wardian district (see Fig. 3.6). While the original structure has since been destroyed, the painted wall panels were removed during the 1960 excavation and taken to the Graeco-Roman Museum for public display.

The date of this tomb has been much debated. The majority of its painting is classically impressionistic in style, while the rustic character of its imagery, which clearly references Egypt with its portrayal of river flora and atmosphere of agricultural abundance, has also been linked to the popularity of pastoral Greek literature in the third and second centuries BCE. The paintings have even been identified as an illustration of the third century Idylls of Theocritus,<sup>21</sup> while the figure of a shepherd on the east wall has been linked to Christian iconography, which has been argued to indicate a date as late

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Venit 2002b, 45-49 figs 30-31. Greve 2014, 207-09, cat. no. A18; Tomb 3: Adriani 1936, pl. 32; 1966, pl. 54, fig. 192; Venit 2002b, 61-65, figs 46-49; Greve 2014, 210-11, cat. no. A19; Tomb 4: Adriani 1966, pl. 58, fig. 204; Venit 2002b, 49-50, fig. 34; Greve 2014, 211-12, cat. no. A20.

<sup>20</sup> Riad 1964, 69-72; Adriani 1966, 157, 159; Riad 1967, 93-96; Venit 1988, 71-91; 1989, 219-22; Venit 2002b, 198; Greve 2014, 230, cat. no. A44.

<sup>21</sup> Venit 1988, 116-17.

as the fourth century.<sup>22</sup> The tomb is most convincingly dated to the second century BCE, primarily on the basis of the subject matter of its principal wall painting.<sup>23</sup> Initially identified as the earliest known depiction in Egypt of a saqiya, this has been called into question as the image depicts a slotted, horizontally-turning water-wheel, while a saqiya is a mechanism best understood as used a vertical pot-garland used to raise water from the river.<sup>24</sup> The ‘sketchy’ style of the paintings has been assessed as supporting the second century BCE date.<sup>25</sup>

The destroyed décor of many tombs can be analysed stylistically from detailed drawings and photographs that were made, such as those of the non-figural, Hellenistic paintings in the Shatby hypogeum (see Fig. 3.5). Other noteworthy tombs whose fabric has not survived but whose form and design were carefully recorded include additional burials in the areas of Kom el-Shuqafa, Gabbari,<sup>26</sup> Shatby, and Wardian (see e.g. Figs 3.7, 3.8);<sup>27</sup> several examples in the eastern necropolis of Hadra;<sup>28</sup> the complex known as Ras el-Tin on Pharos Island (see Fig. 3.9);<sup>29</sup> and individual tombs at Mafrousa,<sup>30</sup> Sidi Gaber,<sup>31</sup> Ramleh,<sup>32</sup> and in the Antoniadis Gardens (see e.g. Fig. 3.10).<sup>33</sup> The extent to which these sites were documented varies. For example, the wall paintings – so similar to the Third Pompeian Style<sup>34</sup> – of the now lost Sieglin tomb at Gabbari (1st-2nd century AD) and Tomb H in the Hall of Caracalla were carefully sketched (see Figs 3.11, 3.12);<sup>35</sup> whereas the appearance of the Ramleh Tomb (1st century BCE-1st century CE), which

<sup>22</sup> Guimier-Sorbets and Seif el-Din 1997, 406; Rodziewicz 1993, 281-90; McKenzie 2007, 389 n. 260; Venit 2002b, 107-116, 198.

<sup>23</sup> Riad 1964, 171, un-numbered figure; 1967, 93-94 pl. III A; Venit 1989, 291-22; 2002, 102-04, figs 86-87.

<sup>24</sup> Oleson 1984, 184-85, 289, 340-41, 382-82, fig. 40.

<sup>25</sup> McKenzie 2007, 389 n. 260.

<sup>26</sup> Breccia 1914b, 36-37; Adriani 1966, 150; Greve 2014, 214-15, cat. nos A23.

<sup>27</sup> Greve 2014, 228-29, cat. nos A42-43.

<sup>28</sup> Tkaczow 1993, 176-77, site 145.

<sup>29</sup> Adriani 1966, 190, 1933-50, 125; Greve 2014, 196-99, cat. nos A07-10.

<sup>30</sup> Botti 1899, 53; Adriani 1966, 148; Greve 2014, 227-28, cat. no. A41.

<sup>31</sup> Tkaczow 1993, 173-74, site 142; Greve 2014, 213-14, cat. no. A22.

<sup>32</sup> Breccia 1914a.

<sup>33</sup> Thiersch 1904, 6-10, 16; Adriani 1966, 143-44; Greve 2014, 199-200, cat. no. A11.

<sup>34</sup> Venit 2002b, 124.

<sup>35</sup> Schreiber and Sieglin 1908, vii.

parallels that of other Roman-period examples, is known only from a written description. Nevertheless, efforts to record the original appearance of Alexandrian tombs have been of immense value, even for structures that survive, since older images often show colours and lines that have since been effaced. While any primary visual source that cannot be viewed in person must be treated with reserve, such secondary records significantly augment the available source material.

### *Previous Research*

Of the publications on Alexandrian tombs, by far the most important are the excavation reports of early scholars such as Hermann Thiersch, Theodor Schreiber, Ernst von Sieglin, Carl Watzinger, Evaristo Breccia, and Rudolf Pagenstecher.<sup>36</sup> Achille Adriani's comprehensive volumes covering the major sites excavated by 1950 were followed by Michael Sabottka's original publication of tombs at Gabbari.<sup>37</sup> Many of these works include meticulous descriptions of now-destroyed tombs. While some of their interpretations have been questioned, such as the dating of tombs and their relation to each other, these volumes remain the principal record for the study of the material.

In addition to these volumes, a modest body of more recent detailed studies and syntheses examines social, ethnic, and art-historical questions raised by Alexandrian funerary architecture. In the mid-twentieth century, Blanche Brown's work on Ptolemaic paintings and mosaics attempted to define a particular "Alexandrian style".<sup>38</sup> A gap in interest in Alexandrian archaeology followed, and the majority of subsequent research has been published in the last two decades.

McKenzie focuses on the Ptolemaic period within the context of her work on Petra, analyzing the architectural elements and wall-paintings of Alexandrian tombs as suggestive of the general aesthetic of the ancient city.<sup>39</sup> She returns to this subject in her

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<sup>36</sup> Breccia 1912; Schreiber, Pagenstecher, von Sieglin, Thiersch, and Watzinger 1908.

<sup>37</sup> Adriani 1933-1950; Sabottka 1983.

<sup>38</sup> Brown 1957.

<sup>39</sup> McKenzie 1990, 61-83.

later work on the architecture of Alexandria and Egypt, where she includes the tombs as a significant group of Alexandrian buildings.<sup>40</sup>

Continuing the scholarship begun with Sabottka, Jean-Yves Empereur and Marie-Dominique Nenna treat the extensive rescue work at Gabbari in Necropoleis 1 and 2,<sup>41</sup> while Empereur examines the catacombs at Kom el-Shuqafa, discussing in particular the cultural identity of the city as reflected in its funerary art.<sup>42</sup> Marjorie Venit has presented a synthesis of the material in her book on the monumental tombs, in addition to her articles on specific burial complexes. She focuses at length on the interchange between classical and traditional Egyptian iconography, especially in the Roman period. Anne-Marie Guimier-Sorbets, who has re-examined the Persephone tomb, addresses the concept of cultural fusion observable in Alexandrian funerary art, a phenomenon that she terms ‘bilingual iconography’.<sup>43</sup>

Christina Riggs’ work on the funerary practices of Roman Egypt discusses at length the distinctive cultural entities of the classical and traditional Egyptian modes of décor, linking the depiction of classical motifs with the non-indigenous ruling elite and that of Egyptian motifs with traditional religious culture, as well as considering what is indicated by identifiable interactions of these two modes.<sup>44</sup> More specifically, she briefly considers questions of identity and belief in Alexandrian society as suggested by the tomb owners’ choice of motifs. More broadly, Judith Corbelli analyses funerary practices in Egypt for the Ptolemaic as well as the Roman period.<sup>45</sup> While Corbelli addresses the duality of style and motifs observable in Alexandrian tombs, she refrains from extensive deliberation on the complex questions considered by Riggs.

Of the scholars who have published on the Ptolemaic and Roman tombs of Alexandria, several have raised key questions of iconographic fusion, social identity, and cultural interaction. Yet, although Venit in particular has traced traditional artistic

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<sup>40</sup> McKenzie 2007, 72-74, 192-94.

<sup>41</sup> Empereur and Nenna 2001; 2003, vols 1-2

<sup>42</sup> Empereur 1998, 156, 164.

<sup>43</sup> Guimier-Sorbets 1997, 1999, 2001a, 2001b, 2004.

<sup>44</sup> Riggs 2005.

<sup>45</sup> Corbelli 2006.

elements in Alexandrian burials to indigenous Egyptian religious art, no one has pursued the possible implications of this issue for the status of indigenous religious culture during these periods. This is the issue on which I focus.

### **3.2. Tomb Design and Architectural Features**

The significance of the funerary art and architecture of Alexandria for this question lies in their complex correlation to two different representational canons. Models and motifs derived from ancient Egyptian tradition stand alongside unaltered versions of classical forms, while others can fall anywhere in between. Furthermore, the architecture of many tombs and the appearance of many of the reliefs, wall-paintings, and sculptures found in them combine these two different traditions into a form that can at times partially be identified as belonging to one or the other, but is also in some sense hybrid. While such an observation touches upon the much-debated existence of an Alexandrian school of art,<sup>46</sup> I am principally interested in the social and religious impetuses that might have influenced the tomb owners' choice of images and design, in the hope of establishing what this exchange might indicate about the status of traditional Egyptian religious culture during this time. To this end, I examine the appearance of traditional Egyptian elements in both the architecture and the iconography of the Ptolemaic and Roman tombs of Alexandria. The focus of this chapter on the city's elite deliberately considers a relatively small demographic group with access to a wider set of stylistic choices than the majority of the population; however, the inclinations of this group would also have been visible to the rest of society and can thus shed light on the general state of their cultural environment in many different ways. From the observable influence of traditional beliefs in these distinct, yet complementary, components, I argue that the city's culturally non-indigenous elite had adopted the concept of the Egyptian afterlife, thus espousing indigenous religious culture at least in the extremity of death.

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<sup>46</sup> See Brown 1957, 88-93; Whitehouse 2010, 1009.

### *The Influence of Indigenous Mortuary Tradition on Tomb Design*

The first factor to consider is the shape and aspect of the tomb spaces themselves. A notable number of burials can be dated from soon after Alexandria's foundation onward, and a clear evolution of plan types over time is observable. The earliest non-indigenous burials at Alexandria clearly follow Greek tradition, including both cremation (with the remains either deposited in urns or not) and simple inhumation.<sup>47</sup> However, examination of the evolution of these spaces reveals that, within a short time, Greek funerary conventions were adapted to differing sensibilities. Although the precise dating of many tombs remains controversial, it is accepted that, in the early days of the city, burials progressed from simple pit and shaft graves to extended underground galleries with burials along them, and underground chambers. These were later followed by the development of monumental hypogea with courts open to the sky.<sup>48</sup> I argue that the development of extended burial facilities in Alexandria echoes the layout of traditional Egyptian excavated tombs (both those delved under the ground and those cut into cliffs, depending on their location), reflecting the influence of indigenous religion on Alexandrian funerary practice. Specifically, I submit that this evolution of site and spatial design indicates the adoption of the Egyptian belief in an afterlife, and consequently shows that indigenous religious culture remained important and esteemed.

To demonstrate the full significance of the tombs' ultimate forms, it is essential to consider first the original Hellenic nature of Alexandrian burials, which makes clear the scale of the transformation that took place. Although the primarily utilitarian form of the earliest Alexandrian pit and shaft graves is not traceable to any particular culture or region, the stelae which originally surmounted many of these clearly derive their form directly from Greek funerary stelae (see Figs 3.13, 3.14).<sup>49</sup> This form, best known from Classical Attica where it originated in the fifth century BCE, is found intermittently in

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<sup>47</sup> Venit 1999, 99; Georges 2001, figs 6.4-6.5, 6.12-6.13; Bailet and Grévin 2001, 291; Guimier-Sorbets and Nenna 2003, 559.

<sup>48</sup> Venit 2002b, 95.

<sup>49</sup> Schmidt 2003, 13-16, figs 15-18.

Hellenistic Greek settlements as far afield as Chersonesos Taurica on the Black Sea.<sup>50</sup> Known as *naiskoi* from their likeness to small shrines, these simple grave-markers comprise a relief or painted scene surmounted by a pediment. The scenes on the Alexandrian stelae, which often represent the deceased, can be compared in many cases with typical Greek funerary motifs and compositions found on the examples from Attica, such as images of childbirth, heroic figures, and of *dexiosis* (handclasping).<sup>51</sup> The fact that Hellenic members of Alexandria's population were buried in these graves is indicated not only by the Greek names written on the accompanying cinerary urns, but also by the frequent allusions to the foreign birthplace of the deceased.<sup>52</sup>

The simple form of these early burials is consistent with traditional Hellenic attitudes toward death as a terminative event, whose finite nature required little of the burial place beyond preserving and glorifying the memory of the departed.<sup>53</sup> Greek myth told of an underworld where the shade of the deceased would continue to exist; however, this concept required neither the preservation of the body, nor the provision of a specially designed space for interment. Since the most significant group of early Alexandrians consisted of soldiers and colonists of largely Hellenic origin,<sup>54</sup> the Greek nature of these earliest burials, including both cremations and interments, is in no way surprising. What is noteworthy, however, is that Greek burial practice quickly gave way to a very different tradition of deposition.

From at least the early third century BCE, the early pit and shaft burials at Alexandria were supplanted by new funerary spaces, including underground galleries of burial niches known as *loculi*, a development then unique to Alexandria.<sup>55</sup> These spaces bear clear similarities to Egyptian prototypes. Alexandrian *loculi* can be directly compared to the animal necropoleis at Saqqara and Memphis, where the mummified remains of sacred ibises, baboons, and bulls (the Apis), whose cults were practiced in

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<sup>50</sup> Johansen 1951, 13; Posamentir 2011, 357.

<sup>51</sup> Brown 1957, 15-18, pls I-IV.

<sup>52</sup> Enklaar 1985, 145; Venit 2002b, 10.

<sup>53</sup> Mikalson 2011, 179-80.

<sup>54</sup> Fraser 1972 vol. 1, 52-53; Fischer-Bovet 2014, 362.

<sup>55</sup> Venit 2002b, 25; Schmidt 2003, 20-23.

temple complexes on the site, were deposited in perpendicular burial niches lining underground passageways that were probably lengthened according to need.<sup>56</sup> An even closer comparison can be seen in the Third Intermediate Period “Tomb of the Harsephes priests” at Abusir el-Meleq near the Fayyum, which consisted of twenty-one burial chambers perpendicular to a central shaft and which continued to be used through the Roman period.<sup>57</sup> The strength of these resemblances suggests that the innovation of loculus galleries for the burial of human remains was influenced by an awareness of these or similar sacred spaces from indigenous tradition.

The axial layout and narrow dimensions of Alexandrian loculus galleries may have been partly due to challenges posed by the local topography and/or spatial restrictions of their urban environment; however, they are significantly distant from the primarily Hellenic character of the stela-surmounted pit graves of the city’s earliest inhabitants, which would have been the most appropriate choice for a lack of space and difficult medium. The plans of more costly Alexandrian tombs show an even wider break from traditional Greek burial types. By at least the early third century BCE, the wealthiest inhabitants of Alexandria were constructing monumental underground tombs most closely comparable to the chambered tombs of elite individuals in pharaonic Egypt. Of the significance of underground rock-cut tombs in indigenous Egyptian thought, cutting a tomb into the living rock both brought the deceased closer to the gods of the underworld and created a womb-like cave from whence the dead could be reborn.<sup>58</sup> Despite the amount of earth moved in the creation of Macedonian tumuli, their mounded structures do not display such a notion in quite the same way as do underground Egyptian complexes. McKenzie, Daszewski, and Schmidt observe that the elaborate, multi-chambered, subterranean tombs of Alexandria are more closely comparable to indigenous Egyptian tomb types, such as that found in the Theban necropoleis, than to any other

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<sup>56</sup> Emery 1970, 5-11 pls XII fig. 3-4; XIII; 9 fig. 1-2; Venit 2002b, 16; Smith 2011, 3-9; Thompson 2012, 177-96.

<sup>57</sup> Riggs 2005, 150, fig. 69. Schmidt 2003, 10-11.

<sup>58</sup> Stammers 2009, 40-41, 121-23.

possible typological parallel (Schmidt notes this specifically in tombs with axial plans).<sup>59</sup> Even closer to Alexandria than Thebes is the necropolis of Saqqara, which served the former Egyptian capital of Memphis at the apex of the Delta and remained in use throughout the Late Period. The proximity of Saqqara to Alexandria—less than 250 kilometers to the south in an era when a painter in Alexandria might be hired to decorate homes in Oxyrhynchus<sup>60</sup>—supports the idea that concepts of funerary architecture might have been transmitted down the Nile to Alexandria, where the local topography of limestone was ideal for the excavation of rock-cut subterranean tombs. At Saqqara, the huge rock-cut tomb of the Late Period vizier Bakenrenef, in continuous use from the Saite through the Ptolemaic periods, consists of an extended sequence of chambers (see Fig. 3.15). This plan is closely comparable with the axially-planned Alexandrian hypogea, such as the Ptolemaic Anfushy Tomb 2 on Pharos Island, in which the burial chamber of the primary occupant is the focal point at the end of several preceding rooms decorated with Egyptianising motifs, as discussed below (see Fig. 3.4).

An exception to this development is the Alabaster Tomb. Its use of monolithic pieces of alabaster suggests that it was built for an extremely wealthy and important person, and consequently it has been controversially linked with the legendary tomb of Alexander the Great.<sup>61</sup> According to Zenobius (c. 117-138 CE), the tomb of Alexander, was built in the first half of the third century BCE on the order of Ptolemy II Philadelphus, who moved Alexander's mummified body to Alexandria from its previous resting place in Memphis.<sup>62</sup> Strabo (c. 64 BCE-24 CE) describes the tomb as constructed out of ὑαλίνῃ, alternatively translated as crystal or alabaster.<sup>63</sup> Constructed as a secondary burial at least fifty years after the founding of the city, the tomb of Alexander need not have followed the typical trend of Alexandrian private tombs, but it would have likely been deliberately conspicuous in character. The use of a traditional Macedonian tumulus form would have been fitting for the resting place of Macedonia's greatest son,

<sup>59</sup> Daszewski 1994, 51-68; Schmidt 2003, 10-11; McKenzie 2007, 71, n. 265.

<sup>60</sup> P.Cair. Zen. 3.59445; Nowicka 1984, 256-59.

<sup>61</sup> See Adriani 2000; McKenzie 2007, 74, 389 n. 271.

<sup>62</sup> Zenobius 3.94.

<sup>63</sup> Strabo 17.1.8; McKenzie 2007, 64-65.

and would have emphasised the tomb's exceptional status in contrast to Alexandria's other non-classical burials. Even if the Alabaster Tomb is not that of Alexander, its exclusive material indicates that it must have been constructed as a deliberate reference to, or in imitation of, Alexander's. The socially exceptional nature of this tomb thus makes it less relevant to this discussion.

Large-scale Hellenic tombs such as Greek heroöns and Macedonian tumuli were meant to be sealed after interment, with visitors restricted to the exterior. By contrast, Alexandrian hypogea were clearly designed to be entered regularly by the living, thus diverging significantly from the Hellenic concept of a closed tomb. Within these accessible interiors, the influence of indigenous thought extends even to elements with classical antecedents. Two of the most striking examples of this are the frequent inclusion of *klinai*, or Greek funerary couches, and the commonly used colonnaded-court design that has been compared to the peristyle of Greek domestic architecture.<sup>64</sup>

Both of these elements can be seen at the early Ptolemaic necropolis at Shatby (late 4th-early 3rd century BCE), where the partially preserved Hypogeum A comprises two rooms with loculi and a burial chamber containing two stone *klinai* ranged around a central court open to the sky (see Fig. 3.17).<sup>65</sup> The influence of Greek architectural precursors is also apparent in the later Mustapha Pasha Tomb 1, a hypogeum dated broadly to the third century BCE on architectural and decorative grounds.<sup>66</sup> This tomb contains a *kline* in a separate chamber, and its fully preserved peristyle colonnade clearly follows the Doric order (see Fig. 3.29).

The use of such *klinai* in a funerary setting follows a widespread tradition in Greek and Macedonian funerals, during which the body of the deceased would be laid out temporarily on a couch similar to a banqueting couch.<sup>67</sup> *Klinai* were also occasionally incorporated in the funerary space as a place of deposition, with the bones of the

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<sup>64</sup> Pagenstecher 1919, 98.

<sup>65</sup> Breccia 1912, 32-49, pls 1-16.

<sup>66</sup> Adriani 1936, 173-74.

<sup>67</sup> Boardman and Kurtz 1971, 144; Guimier-Sorbets and Nenna 2003, 535.

deceased placed symbolically on top of the couch.<sup>68</sup> Analogous to this use, the *klinai* at Shatby are distinct in that, despite clearly imitating an item of furniture, they are in fact sarcophagi, hollowed out from the top to create an engaged stone coffin for the permanent deposition of the deceased (see Fig. 3.18).<sup>69</sup> Comparison of the poorly preserved *kline* in Mustapha Pasha Tomb 1 with other examples in the Mustapha Pasha complex indicates that it must have been a sarcophagus comparable to the examples at Shatby.<sup>70</sup>

Alexandrian colonnaded-court, or “peristyle”, tombs provide another example of Hellenic forms diverging from their origins. In traditional Greek architecture, the peristyle form was restricted to grand houses and never employed in a funerary context. Thus, the use of this type in an underground rock-cut tomb represents a significant break with tradition. Rather than following conventional mortuary arrangements, the unprecedented appropriation of a Greek house-type as a funerary structure is instead reminiscent of the Egyptian concept of the tomb as the house of the dead.<sup>71</sup> This correspondence of ideas suggests that, although employing the language of Greek architecture, the designers of the peristyle tombs were engaging with indigenous conceptions of the tomb space. So, as with the loculus doors, we have something that looks Greek but is conceptually Egyptian in purpose.

Despite the classical origins of *klinai* and peristyle courts therefore, the translation of these concepts into Egyptian mortuary tradition, as well as the structural similarities between indigenous tombs and Alexandrian hypogea, indicate that the underground, rock-cut tombs of Alexandria owe the basic character of their design primarily to indigenous prototypes.

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<sup>68</sup> Guimier-Sorbets and Nenna 2003, 553-56, 559-60.

<sup>69</sup> Breccia 1912, 42, pl. 5; for a detailed list of Alexandrian *klinai* see Guimier-Sorbets and Nenna 2003, 545, 547, tables 1-2.

<sup>70</sup> Venit 2002b, 47-49, 58, 65, figs 33, 50.

<sup>71</sup> Snape 2011, 37-39.

### *Egyptianising Architectural Features*

The influence of Egyptian ideas on Alexandrian tomb design extends far beyond structural layout. Egyptianising architectural elements in these tombs reflect a similar adherence to indigenous theology. In contrast to monumental hypogea, whose overall layouts remained largely the same after construction even if later enlarged or refurbished,<sup>72</sup> decorative elements could be renovated more easily, reflecting the proclivities of the tomb owners more directly and more clearly demonstrating change over time.

Several particularly striking examples of renovation can be observed in Anfushy Tomb 2, a structure dated from the early second to the mid-first century BCE.<sup>73</sup> Room 1 is primarily noteworthy for the painted treatment of its walls, which are divided above mid-height into three registers of a chequered pattern mimicking a design of tiles and white panels depicting crowns, separated by striated bands (see Figs 3.19, 3.20).<sup>74</sup> This design, which is also seen in Ras el Tin Tomb 8,<sup>75</sup> imitates an Egyptianising style of palace wall ornamentation, in which coloured faience tiles, cut stonework, and inlays (or painted simulations of all three) were applied in just such a pattern.<sup>76</sup> Evidence of a similar tiled wall treatment has been uncovered in the Royal Quarter at Alexandria, indicating that this decorative tradition was adopted in Alexandria, although the precise location of its use is not known.<sup>77</sup> While the chequered pattern cannot be restricted to a single cultural aesthetic, the Egyptianising character of this wall treatment is emphasised by the depiction of the Egyptian complex crowns, including an *atef* and a *hemhem*. Far from indicating royal connections, Egyptian crowns or headdresses were used decoratively in many different contexts, both within Egypt and without—such as at Rome where they featured in Egyptianising art—and in which they may have had little

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<sup>72</sup> Venit 1999, 644.

<sup>73</sup> Botti 1902a, 13; 1902b, 17-18; Adriani 1952, 64; McKenzie 1990, 67-68; Venit 2002b, 78-79, fig. 78.

<sup>74</sup> Adriani 1952, 68, fig. 39; Venit 2002b, 80-81, figs 64-65.

<sup>75</sup> Adriani 1940, 44-45; Venit 2002b, 72-73, fig. 55, 200.

<sup>76</sup> Pagenstecher 1919, 179-80; Adriani 1952; Venit 2002b, 73.

<sup>77</sup> Adriani 1940, 44-45, pls XII.2 and XIV.2; Venit 2002b, 73, 82.

meaning other than their use as a form of ornamentation.<sup>78</sup> In this context, however, the crowns have been interpreted as exalting the dead with divine honours that would normally have been reserved for royalty.<sup>79</sup> Whether this was the intention of the tomb designers or not, it is clear that they deliberately decorated this tomb in an Egyptianising, as opposed to classical, style.

The layering of plaster in this tomb shows that an earlier Greek-style zone-motif imitating expensive stone panelling was replaced with this more indigenous-style decoration. This and other indications of reworking visible throughout the tomb led Adriani to the conclusion that the décor of Anfushy Tomb 2 underwent a renovation from Greek to Egyptian style in the mid-second century BCE,<sup>80</sup> thus demonstrating a clear shift in the decorative inclinations of successive owners (see Fig. 3.20).

The significance of the rest of Anfushy Tomb 2's architectural décor shows that the tomb owner's ultimate preference for Egyptian style was inspired by more than just a fashion trend. The reproduction of theologically significant motifs indicates genuine engagement with the indigenous religious concepts whence they derive.

Some of the most significant instances of Egyptian influence in Alexandrian funerary architecture are in doorway elements, corresponding with the nature of portals as focal points of Egyptian tombs. The Egyptian character of Tomb 2's redecoration is accentuated by the renovation of the doorway leading into Room 2 opposite the entrance (see Fig. 3.21).<sup>81</sup> The portal is surmounted by a segmental pediment and, on a secondary recessed frame, by a frieze or cornice of uraei – a motif that in singular form represented Wadjet, the divine cobra and protectress of pharaoh, used in this form at least since the Third Dynasty in the mid-third millennium.<sup>82</sup> In the chamber beyond, Room 2, the chequered pattern continues down to the floor, with a false door forming an Egyptian-style focal point at the back (see Fig. 3.22).<sup>83</sup> Supported by a geometric base, the false

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<sup>78</sup> Kákosy 1983, 57–60, pls 1–3; Goette 2012, 30, figs 15, 16a, b.

<sup>79</sup> Kákosy 1983, 55.

<sup>80</sup> Adriani 1966, 193.

<sup>81</sup> Adriani 1952, 70, fig. 40; Venit 2002b, 82, figs 66–67.

<sup>82</sup> Shaw 2000, 480.

<sup>83</sup> Adriani 1952, 72, fig. 42; Venit 2002b, 83, fig. 68.

door is composed of several traditional Egyptian elements, including cavetto cornices, uraeus friezes, and papyrus capitals; and its design of nested doorframes is comparable to traditional prototypes (see Fig. 3.23). While elements such as walls painted to imitate Egyptian tile-work and the use of segmental pediments over doorways could conceivably be phenomena of fashion, Egyptianising false doors in Alexandrian tombs not only have stylistic significance but also represent a key feature of indigenous mortuary religion. As magical portals permitting the soul of the deceased to enter and return from the world of the dead, false doors were crucial elements in funerary belief and practice.<sup>84</sup> At Anfushy, the role of this feature as a portal to the other world is emphasised by its placement at the end of a sequence of doorways through which the living could pass before reaching a final door through which only the deceased could move. This feature not only shows that the tomb owners believed in an afterlife, but also that the afterlife in question was an Egyptian one, to which the soul of the deceased could pass through an Egyptian-style false door.

Decorative architectural elements, both plastic and painted, that derive from traditional Egyptian types can be found in Alexandrian tombs of almost all periods. Brown and McKenzie have observed the existence of a distinctive Alexandrian architectural style, characterised not only by a blending of classical and indigenous Egyptian traditions but also by elements apparently original to the city, some of which were imitated in other places within Alexandria's range of influence, notably Petra.<sup>85</sup> These unique elements include features such as segmental pediments, curved entablatures, and "conches" that appear classicising and yet can be traced to Egyptian visual concepts. These are associated with aspects of wall painting, such as the use of blue paint to create the illusion of space beyond a solid wall seen, for example, within the false window niches in the south wall of Shatby Hypogeum A (see Fig. 3.24).<sup>86</sup> For this discussion, however, the mixing of classical and Egyptian styles in tombs is less indicative of a secular artistic originality, than of a marked shift in cultural attitudes and

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<sup>84</sup> Schäfer 1986, 217.

<sup>85</sup> Brown 1957; McKenzie 1990, 88-89, 97-99.

<sup>86</sup> McKenzie 1990, 89, 96, 99.

beliefs. I argue that the proper inclusion of elements of religious importance shows a serious interest in the indigenous theology behind them.

### ***Adoption of Beliefs: Implications of Mummification***

The form of dynastic period Egyptian tombs is bound up inextricably with traditional beliefs in the afterlife. While a comparison of indigenous and Alexandrian tomb design does not necessarily demonstrate that their builders shared identical beliefs, the similarities suggest that their concerns for the afterlife were likewise similar. The fact that Alexandrian burial practices shifted from the plain Greek grave holding a simple interment or cinerary urn to extended, monumental, chambered hypogea similar to indigenous models points toward a significant shift in beliefs. The significance of this development is emphasised by the effort required to engineer and decorate such costly underground structures, which would have required a massive increase in expenditure from the practice of burying the dead in simple graves. Furthermore, if the designs of Alexandrian tombs show that their owners believed in an afterlife, the architectural features examined above demonstrate the indigenous character of this belief. These developments, I argue, indicate that the religious traditions of the city's population changed to include the Egyptian belief in an afterlife with the deposition of the body in elaborate underground tombs.

### ***Evidence for Mummification***

To appreciate fully the significance of this evolution of burial spaces and the development of their architecture, it is necessary to observe their coexistence with other deviations from traditional Greek burial practice. The Hellenic customs of inhumation and of cremation and subsequent burial in an urn remained popular for Alexandrian funerals until the ascendancy of Christianity.<sup>87</sup> That cremation and inhumation were practiced alongside each other is demonstrated by the 1989 discovery of a tomb at Wardian containing both a *kline* and rectangular loculi for the interment of entire bodies,

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<sup>87</sup> Venit 2002b, 24; Breccia 1912, xxii-xxiv.

while fragments of Hadra hydriae, Greek-style crematory urns used from the fourth to the second century BCE,<sup>88</sup> were found scattered on the floor. This tomb, which was later destroyed by the construction project that uncovered it, was difficult to date, with elements pointing variously from the Ptolemaic period to the beginning of the second century CE.<sup>89</sup> This example highlights not only how challenging it can be to date these spaces but also how misleading it can be to view Alexandrian modes of burial as linked to specific temporal phases. The Wardian tomb is paralleled by later examples, such as the Roman period main tomb at Kom el-Shuqafa, which combines *klinai* with loculi that could equally hold urns, un-preserved bodies, or mummies. Yet, while cremation and inhumation continued to be widespread methods of treating the corpse, it is clear that these practices were supplemented with mummification from very early in the life of the city.

The use of mummification at the very beginning of Alexandrian history is implied by the ancient tradition, recorded by Curtius Rufus c. 41-79 CE, that the body of Alexander himself was embalmed by Egyptians.<sup>90</sup> The practice is also illustrated by painted scenes of bandaged bodies and canopic urns in Alexandrian tombs, as discussed below. Mummification became so prevalent that embalming workshops eventually formed a noteworthy feature of the Alexandrian necropoleis, as noted by Strabo c. 26-20 BCE in the first years of Roman rule.<sup>91</sup> The humidity and rising water table of Alexandria have not preserved many Greek and Roman mummies within the city.<sup>92</sup> Nevertheless, certain surviving examples, such as a cache of mummified adults and children discovered in a poor state of preservation at Fort Saleh in the west of the city in 1899, attest to the existence of the practice.<sup>93</sup> Many mummies from the Ptolemaic and Roman periods have been found throughout the rest of the country, from Marina el-Alamein to the west of Alexandria, to the Fayyum and Luxor/Thebes in the south where

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<sup>88</sup> Cook 1966, 8.

<sup>89</sup> Abd el-Fattah and Choukri 1998, 42.

<sup>90</sup> Curtius Rufus 10.10.13.

<sup>91</sup> Strabo 17.1.10.

<sup>92</sup> Breccia 1932, 26; Venit 2002b, 165.

<sup>93</sup> Botti 1899, 41-45; Venit 1999, 644 no. 12.

conditions are far more favourable for the preservation of organic material.<sup>94</sup> While the portraits and masks that adorned these images generally depict the deceased in Greek and Roman dress and display a clearly non-traditional style of craftsmanship, these characteristics detract very little from the essential Egyptian character of the practice, as seen not only in their embalming, but also in the Egyptian religious motifs found on the bodies of the mummies.<sup>95</sup> Despite the lack of physical evidence in the damaging environment of the Delta, the prevalence of mummies throughout the country as a whole means that the existence of this practice at Alexandria must be seriously considered.

If mummification was popular in the capital, Egypt's Hellenised urban elite must have at least partially adopted Egyptian funerary practices. Widespread preservation of the body by mummification is supported further by the architectural development of Alexandrian tombs clearly designed for an afterlife. However, the extent to which this adoption of Egyptian burial practices by the city's elite was linked directly to indigenous mortuary religion cannot be fully determined from the architecture alone. This question is more clearly answered in the iconography of these spaces, which clearly and frequently depict mummification under the guidance of Egypt's indigenous gods.

### **3.3. Iconography**

That Alexandrian tomb design and architecture were strongly influenced by traditional Egyptian religious beliefs is upheld by the evidence of tomb paintings, reliefs, and statuary. In this section, I argue that scenes and decorative motifs in Alexandrian tombs also demonstrate that the Alexandrian elite assimilated Egyptian funerary practices. Painted and sculpted images possess a wealth of complex symbolism, while the relative ease with which their design and content can be modified makes them particularly telling evidence for individual preferences. Thus, while the cultural origins of features of structural design and architectural décor may be analysed with some

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<sup>94</sup> Bierbrier 1997, viii.

<sup>95</sup> Taylor 2000, 9-13; Walker 2000b, 23-25; 2000c, 47; Stadler 2012, 391-92.

confidence, evidence of indigenous influences is more conclusively identifiable in painting and sculpture.

It is first essential to distinguish between cultural origins of motifs, including symbols and subject matter, and cultural influences in modes of depiction, including style, composition, and context. Venit differentiates between tombs with “Egyptianising” decoration and those exhibiting a “double style” involving a combination of classical and indigenous traditions, an appellation also discussed by Riggs.<sup>96</sup> I attempt instead to analyse the examples treated here in terms of motifs and modes, so that a scene of a mummy lying on a garlanded couch can be described as an Egyptian motif depicted in a classical mode, while a mummy on a leonine bier is identified as an Egyptian motif in an Egyptian mode.

Another distinction that must be made is to recognise differences in stylistic hands. Indigenous subjects in Alexandrian tombs almost always appear to have been executed by artists trained primarily in the classical tradition. While no known Alexandrian tomb can be described as authentically indigenous in its style of decoration, almost all surviving hypogea include traditional Egyptian artistic motifs, and these are occasionally presented in the corresponding Egyptian mode. Scenes frequently mimic Egyptian prototypes, and in a few instances the image comes visually very close to indigenous style despite a discernible classical hand. I propose that, despite aberrations in style, modes, and motifs, the often accurate depiction and contextual use of traditional funerary imagery in Alexandrian tombs demonstrates that the owners must have engaged meaningfully with Egyptian religion in the funerary context.

### ***Funerary Scenes and Motifs***

#### ***Mustapha Pasha Tombs***

The early predominance of Hellenic funerary practice in Alexandrian burials has been shown in part by the painted stelae discussed above depicting Greek funerary scenes. This classical tradition is continued by a painting above the three central

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<sup>96</sup> Venit 2002b, 120, 123-24; Riggs 2005, 7-11.

doorways of the peristyle courtyard of the third century BCE Tomb 1 at Mustapha Pasha. This image likely dates to the original creation of the tomb because it occupies a clear focal point with no evidence of an underlying scene. It depicts three men on horseback with two draped female figures and an altar between them and is purely Macedonian in style, from the animated lines of the rearing horses to the *kausia* and *chlamys* that each man wears (see Fig. 3.26).<sup>97</sup> The pose of the horsemen has been compared to that of an equestrian statue,<sup>98</sup> and the scene closely recalls other Macedonian paintings such as that found on the fourth century BCE “Throne of Eurydice” from Vergina<sup>99</sup> and the frieze above an inner doorway in Tomb 2 at the same location (the ‘Tomb of Philip’; see Fig. 3.27 a, b).<sup>100</sup> The horsemen in this frieze have been identified as huntsmen in a heroic paradigm ideally suited to the funerary space.<sup>101</sup> Similarly, the pose, dress, and treatment of the bodies of the two women bearing phialae are very similar to that of a figure in Tomb 1 of the Bella tumulus at Vergina (see Fig. 3.28).<sup>102</sup> The Alexandrian images of horsemen and standing women are obviously closely tied to the funerary associations of their Macedonian counterparts who, as heroic male figures<sup>103</sup> and female divine personifications, indicate the glorification of the dead.<sup>104</sup> This Macedonian funerary image contrasts strongly with the six Egyptian sphinxes that guard the three doorways immediately beneath it, as I show below. Other paintings in roughly contemporary tombs likewise demonstrate that, even at this early date, the classical sensibilities seen in this fresco had indigenous parallels.

### *Anfushy Tomb 2*

The Hellenic Mustapha Pasha fresco is closely followed in the Alexandrian archaeological record by a strongly Egyptian-style wall painting. In the stairwell of the

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<sup>97</sup> Adriani 1936, 36; Brown 1957, 52-53, cat. no. 34; 55-57; Venit 2002b, 55-58, fig. 42.

<sup>98</sup> Venit 2002b, 57.

<sup>99</sup> Kottaridi 2007, 39-42, figs 12-13.

<sup>100</sup> Brecolaki 2006, pls 27-28; Franks 2012, figs 4a-b.

<sup>101</sup> Franks 2012, 107-08.

<sup>102</sup> Brecolaki 2006, pl. 60.2.

<sup>103</sup> Franks 2012, 72-74.

<sup>104</sup> Brecolaki 2006, 117, 164.

Ptolemaic Tomb 2 at Anfushy (c. 200-30 BCE), on the wall of the first landing where it faces the entrance, a painted scene shows a figure – tentatively identified as female by Venit<sup>105</sup> – dressed in white standing between two male deities.<sup>106</sup> One has the head of a falcon while the other, with a human head, is flanked by a female figure (see Fig. 3.30). This painting bears no observable Hellenising elements, although it is highly possible that the modern restoration has obscured any original classical nuances in favour of a more traditional Egyptian appearance. Nevertheless, it is a tableau based on a long-established Egyptian composition – the presentation of the deceased to Osiris. This scene can be found in various other funerary contexts from the Ptolemaic and Roman periods and was clearly a popular subject.<sup>107</sup> Although none of the figures here is captioned, their identification is fairly obvious: the falcon-headed figure is the god Horus, the male figure attending to the central figure of the deceased is likely Osiris the Egyptian god of the underworld, despite his pharaoh-like appearance, and the attendant female is Isis as the companion of Osiris. Each figure seems to adhere closely to Egyptian conventions: all four wear proper traditional garb and they are shown within the Egyptian parameters of two-dimensional representations, with the chest depicted frontally while the face and thighs are shown in profile.<sup>108</sup>

The arrangement of the feet is of worthy of particular note: they are positioned flat along a single baseline, with no difference in treatment of right and left. In the centre of the scene, the foot of the deceased overlaps that of the deity in a distinctly Egyptian design. In traditional iconography the deceased should not have overlapped a god; similarly, the depictions of the gods are not completely accurate. However, these indigenous compositional features, in contrast to the classical style observable in the Mustapha Pasha horsemen and other Alexandrian tomb paintings, indicate that the artist was either partly trained in the Egyptian tradition or was carefully presenting a traditional scene in full. Either way, the meticulous attention to detail indicates a decision by the

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<sup>105</sup> Venit 2002b, 78-79.

<sup>106</sup> Adriani 1952, 64, pl. XXXVII, fig. 1; Botti 1902a, 13; 1902b, 17-18.

<sup>107</sup> Abdalla 1992, 101-03; Riggs 2005, 127.

<sup>108</sup> See Schäfer 1986, 277-309.

patron not merely to appropriate motifs and concepts of Egyptian art, but to attempt to adopt an indigenous composition more or less entirely. This example thus suggests strongly that, even if the elite Alexandrian patrons of this tomb did not fully understand the ideological intricacies of the scenes that they chose to use, they were nonetheless wholly willing to engage with traditional visual culture and the religious concepts it represented.

### *Ba-bird in the Saqiya Tomb*

Another Egyptian funerary motif is preserved in the rescued paintings of the Saqiya Tomb from Wardian, controversially dated to the second century BCE.<sup>109</sup> This tomb is best known for its abundant naturalistic, classical imagery; however, a highly stylised human-headed bird painted on the façade of a sarcophagus is similar in some ways to later Egyptianising Roman wall-painting (see Fig. 3.34).<sup>110</sup> It is particularly comparable to the paintings found in the so-called Aula Isiaca at Rome, which is dated to the first century CE and associated with the late second to early third Pompeian style.<sup>111</sup> While the sirens of Greek myth are described as having a similar appearance as half-women, half-birds, the the lotus flower on which the bird stands, and the skull-cap that it wears identify it as an Egyptian ba-bird.<sup>112</sup> Representing the deceased in the afterlife in traditional Egyptian religion, the ba-bird was believed to perpetuate the deceased after death and signified the restored potential for movement, returning to the mummy from the other world at will.<sup>113</sup> It thus played an extremely important role in the Egyptian concept of death and rebirth, and its image figured prominently in ancient indigenous depictions of funerary rites and of existence in the afterlife (see Fig 3.35).

The Saqiya Tomb ba-bird is portrayed in a classical style: scowling, with eyes that turn down at the corners, a protuberant nose, and evidence of shading along the

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<sup>109</sup> See notes 21-23, 25.

<sup>110</sup> Riad 1967, 95-96, pl. IV B; Venit 2002b, 106, fig. 91.

<sup>111</sup> Iacopi 1997, 5-6.

<sup>112</sup> Žabkar 1975, 588-90.

<sup>113</sup> Quirke 1992, 105-06; Taylor 2001, 20-23.

throat and jaw – all very untraditional characteristics of the Egyptian motif. It is positioned before a fixture alternatively identifiable as a Late Period Egyptian horned altar,<sup>114</sup> such as that found at the tomb of Petosiris, an Egyptian priest who lived at the end of the fourth century BCE (see Fig. 4.44), or as an offering stand bearing loaves.<sup>115</sup> The composition of a ba-bird before an altar of this nature has no known antecedent in Egyptian art. These characteristics mark this ba-bird as an Egyptian motif in a non-Egyptian mode. Nevertheless, its presence in the tomb, and specifically on the sarcophagus of the deceased, indicates that although the designers may have been unfamiliar or unconcerned with the conventions that traditionally governed the figure's appearance, they were aware of and desired to evoke the ba-bird's next-worldly connotations. Thus, this tomb supplies evidence of at least partial adherence to Egyptian funerary beliefs.

### *Sieglin Tomb*

Traditional Egyptian funerary scenes, in some instances concurrent with classical imagery, also occur in Alexandrian tombs of the Roman period.<sup>116</sup> The lost Sieglin tomb, now known only from a sketch, has been dated to the first or second century AD from the similarity of its wall paintings to the Third Pompeian Style.<sup>117</sup> In the surviving image, dainty candelabra motifs separate the frame visually into zones that are otherwise undifferentiated, in contrast to clearly defined Egyptian registers. Yet, these contain both standing and recumbent Apis bulls, one of the most sacred animals in Egyptian tradition, and on the central wall two winged figures face each other over a standing figure, flanked by figures carrying what appear to be strips of linen for bandaging mummies. Thus, the classical Sieglin tomb indicates an affiliation with indigenous religious beliefs and,

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<sup>114</sup> Venit 1988, 106.

<sup>115</sup> See De Vos 1980, pl. xv.2.

<sup>116</sup> Similar, contemporaneous mixed imagery can also be found outside Alexandria, such as at Antaeopolis (Qau el-Kebir) where a painted tomb preserves images of Egyptian gods in Egyptian style against a background of classical decoration (Whitehouse 2010, 1028, pl. 32), and Kom Abu Billou two kilometers west of the Rosetta branch of the Nile, where figures of classical and indigenous gods can be found depicted separately in the same necropolis (McCleary 1992, 223-26).

<sup>117</sup> Schreiber 1908, vii, fig. 1; Adriani 1966, 178, no. 123; Venit 2002b, 124, fig. 102.

despite not depicting a body, provides a strong piece of evidence in favour of mummification.

### *Kom el-Shuqafa*

In the surviving main tomb at Kom el-Shuqafa, dated to the Roman period by the Flavian-style portrait statues found inside (69-78 CE),<sup>118</sup> multiple traditional scenes provide even more convincing evidence for adherence to Egyptian funerary beliefs and the practice of mummification. Along the back wall of the central niche, which would have contained the main burial in its fully preserved Roman-style sarcophagus, a scene in relatively high relief depicts a masked, mummiform body laid out on a lion-headed bier and attended by Anubis, the ibis-headed Thoth, and the falcon-headed Horus (see Fig. 3.39).<sup>119</sup> These three gods wear headdresses derived from traditional prototypes, including the *pschent*, or double crown worn by Horus, the sun disk and uraei headdress of Anubis, and the *atef* crown worn by Thoth.<sup>120</sup> Beneath the bier, three receptacles for the embalmed organs of the deceased, now generally termed canopic jars,<sup>121</sup> stand in a row. The jar stoppers represent three of the four sons of Horus: Duamutef, Imsety, and Qebehsenuf; the guardians, respectively, of the stomach, liver, and intestines of the deceased. Hapy, the fourth canopic deity and protector of the lungs, is omitted.<sup>122</sup> No examples of canopic jars intended for funerary use are known from this late period, which brings into question the extent to which these scenes may have been understood as simply representing an archetypal ideal. Nonetheless, the continued practice of mummification at this time indicates that these scenes must have reflected reality at least to some extent.

Although the portrayal of the body on a couch and the deities loosely follow traditional representational conventions, the classically trained hand of the artist is clear

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<sup>118</sup> Venit 2002b, 129.

<sup>119</sup> Venit 2002b, 136-37, fig. 115.

<sup>120</sup> Seeber 1980, 811-16; Vassilika 1989, 87-90.

<sup>121</sup> Martin 1980, 316-19.

<sup>122</sup> Taylor 2001, 65-76.

from the fleshy forms and the untraditional combinations of motifs, such as the *atef* crown on the leonine head of the bier and the feather, presumably that of the goddess Ma'at, unusually positioned at the foot of the forward leg. Despite this, every element of the subject matter appears to derive from Egyptian types. Even the absence of a fourth canopic jar beneath the funerary couch, a discrepancy described by Venit as “one of the anomalies of the Egyptianising content of the tomb”,<sup>123</sup> is not unparalleled (see e.g. Fig. 3.54) and seems more likely to be an artistic decision to avoid truncating the figure of Anubis than to show ignorance of the standard set. Such inaccuracies can be contrasted with other examples of Ptolemaic and Roman period funerary art that follow the indigenous canon much more closely, such as that in “House 21” at Tuna el-Gebel, which displays a mix of classical and purely indigenous representational conventions,<sup>124</sup> or the tomb of Petubastis in the Dakhleh Oasis, where it has been observed that none of the elements in the tomb's décor are without indigenous parallels.<sup>125</sup> Nonetheless, the Kom el-Shuqafa scenes demonstrate the significant influence of Egyptian artistic modes and motifs in Alexandrian funerary art.

The composition on the back central wall is based on a traditional scene in which the body of the deceased is embalmed by Anubis to ensure its preservation and to prepare it for rebirth (see e.g. Fig. 3.40).<sup>126</sup> More specifically, the presence of Horus and Thoth, combined with the depiction of a lotus-shaped cup in the hand of Anubis and the vessel in the right hand of Thoth, identifies this as a scene of lustration or washing of the body, a ritual of purification in which the Rhind Magical Papyrus, an indigenous sacred text from ca. 200 BCE, expressly describe Horus and Thoth as taking part.<sup>127</sup> Earlier depictions of this scene confirm that the details of this relatively late description accurately transcribed a long-standing tradition (see e.g. Fig. 3.41). The purifying symbolism of the water used in the lustration ritual linked it to the creation narrative in which the sun was born from the waters of Nun, and the lustration of the mummy

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<sup>123</sup> Venit 2002b, 136.

<sup>124</sup> Kaplan 1999, 162-5, pls 80-5; Riggs 2005, 129-39.

<sup>125</sup> Osing et al. 1982, pls 20-24.

<sup>126</sup> Ikram and Dodson 1998, 18, fig. 6.

<sup>127</sup> Rhind Magical Papyrus 6.1-3; Translation in Möller 1913, 31.

consequently had pronounced associations with rebirth.<sup>128</sup> Therefore, the depiction of the lustration ritual, combined with the presence of the canopic jars emphasises the fact that the tomb's main occupant was meant to have undergone the full Egyptian ritual of mummification in anticipation of an afterlife.

Finally, the positioning of this, the most immediately visible scene in the tomb, directly above the central sarcophagus invites to the viewer to conflate the mummy shown on the bier with the body of the deceased lying directly below. Thus, the scene in Kom el-Shuqafa not only displays an accurate comprehension of traditional theology but also strongly implies that the principal occupant of the tomb would have been mummified according to indigenous convention. Despite the dearth of mummies surviving in Alexandria therefore, the continuation of this practice into the Roman period is extremely probable. This indicates that wealthy Alexandrians subscribed to a belief in the Egyptian afterlife requiring the traditional preservation of the physical body.

From this scene it is natural to project the identity of the deceased onto further scenes. On the back walls of the left and right niches, a male figure wearing a double crown is offering a broad collar to Apis.<sup>129</sup> This composition appears to be taken from Egyptian temple scenes rather than imitating traditional funerary tableaux, highlighting the question of precisely how these scenes were transmitted from traditional prototypes onto the walls of Alexandrian tombs (considered in more depth below). While Empereur simply refers to this figure as a pharaoh, Venit identifies this figure as either the Roman emperor Vespasian or Titus, suggesting that this scene might be tied to the visit of Vespasian to Egypt in 69 CE and therefore imbued with political overtones.<sup>130</sup> However, examples such as Tomb 2 at Anfushy discussed earlier, with its imitations of palatial faience tile-work and royal crowns (see Fig. 3.19), show that Alexandrian tombs could include imagery that was used elsewhere in royal contexts in a space lacking such associations. Therefore, it is unnecessary to assume that the royal attributes of the Kom

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<sup>128</sup> Taylor 2001, 51-53, fig. 22.

<sup>129</sup> Conceptual parallels with Egyptianising offering scenes in Roman wallpaintings can be seen in the painted scenes from Herculaneum and Pompeii; e.g. De Vos 1980, pls B, C, E.

<sup>130</sup> Empereur 1998, 164; Venit 2002b, 139, 143.

el-Shuqafa figure indicated imperial status. Instead, I propose from the identification of the mummy in the central niche as the deceased that these images represent the justified dead as having successfully overcome death and passed into the presence of the gods, where he is shown in the traditional act of making offerings.

Even more significantly, the reliefs on the side walls of the central niche clearly depict two indigenous priests wearing animal skins, one a *pterephoros* or “feather-wearing” priest making an offering, and the other apparently holding up a ritual papyrus, both to unidentified figures who appear to be Egyptian deities from the solar disks with which they are crowned (see Figs 3.42, 3.43). The depiction of priests performing rituals before indigenous gods reinforces the religious implications of the overall decorative programme.

In all, this tomb contains nine reliefs that draw heavily on traditional Egyptian burial scenes and ritual offering imagery (see Figs 3.39, 3.42-49). Of the twenty-two figures in these scenes, ten are plainly members of the Egyptian pantheon who feature prominently in indigenous funerary imagery: Horus, Isis, and Apis (all shown twice); Anubis; Osiris; Ptah; and the sons of Horus, Qebehsenuef and Hapy. Their depictions in the tomb demonstrate that the designer understood something of their traditional roles and included them for their meaning, not just for visual appeal. Just as the three back wall reliefs of the main tomb seem to depict those buried within the tomb as mummies and personages being attended by Egyptian gods and participating in worship before them, the remaining images also refer to the deceased as a worshipper of these deities. Although it is unclear whether the viewer is meant to understand that the dead also worshipped these deities during life, the fact that the space is dominated by well-informed references to indigenous religion shows that the principal tomb owner had confidence in the traditional gods and anticipated their significance in the afterlife.

*Tigrane Pasha Tomb*

In contrast to the largely canonical programme at Kom el-Shuqafa, the Tigrane Tomb,<sup>131</sup> which is dated to the Hadrianic period by the treatment of its vault (c. 117-138 CE),<sup>132</sup> offers some of the most unconventional examples of Egyptian subject matter in a classical mode ever found in Egypt, including two painted scenes with no obvious parallel either in Egypt or in the rest of the Hellenistic world. The principal painting on the back wall of the central niche shows a shrouded form on a couch flanked by two female figures (see Fig. 3.53). As at Kom el-Shuqafa, the composition of the scene is faithful to traditional depictions of the mummified deceased displayed on a couch and watched over by Isis and Nephthys. The standing figures are likewise rendered in an approximately traditional manner, with shoulders shown full-breadth and heads and lower bodies in profile. Yet, in contrast to the Kom el-Shuqafa example, this scene displays numerous classical motifs, including the delicately turned legs of the couch, the elaborately draped fabric adorning it, and the beribboned swag of garland hanging over the body. Other elements, such as the rhomboid mummy wrappings, nemes-like headdresses of the standing figures, and the crowned falcons on columnar plinths framing the scene are Egyptian motifs portrayed in a nontraditional mode.

This generally Egyptianising scene is accompanied by paintings in a largely non-indigenous mode. In the left niche of the tomb, a man is depicted holding two palm fronds or feathers and standing between pairs of winged figures and seated canids (see Fig. 3.51). The man, whose head is portrayed in a three-quarter view typical of classical and not indigenous art, displays few Egyptian characteristics. Yet, the winged figures flanking him wear Egyptianising uraei on their brows, and the canids are almost certainly representations of Anubis in full jackal form. Palm fronds may symbolise a classical idea of victory over death in keeping with appearances of a personified victory figure in other Roman funerary art;<sup>133</sup> however, Venit suggests that in this context they may instead

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<sup>131</sup> Adriani 1966, 145-46; Kaplan 1999, 142-44; Venit 1997, 701-29; Venit 2002b, 146-59; McKenzie 2007, 193.

<sup>132</sup> Venit 2002b, 147.

<sup>133</sup> Riggs 2005, 199-201; Venit 2002b, 155-56, n. 1013.

have Osirian associations, therefore linking the deceased with indigenous concepts of rebirth. If they are feathers, they may refer to the feather of Maat, against which the hearts of the dead are weighed in the Egyptian Hall of Judgment and which the justified deceased are frequently shown holding in celebration. In the similarly arranged painting in the right niche, the central figure's kneeling stance and cross-hatched bodysuit appear distinctly untraditional, but his uraeus headdress and the indication of Egyptian-style cosmetic lines around his eye imitate traditional conventions (see Fig. 3.52).

Comparison of these two paintings with the central scene shows that the cross-hatched garments worn by both central figures are similar to the mummy in the central scene, whose rhomboid wrappings are characteristic of Ptolemaic and Roman period mummies. The pattern references the fishnet with which the murdered Osiris was rescued from the Nile to be brought back to life by Isis.<sup>134</sup> The mummy is thus linked with this deity of the underworld and the Osirian mythology of resurrection. The appearance of the figures in these scenes is now understandable. In the image on the right, the mummy shown originally with a shrouded face on the bier has regained mobility and acquired a headdress with a royal emblem while bearing palm fronds or feathers. In the image on the left, the figure is largely free from his mummy wrappings and stands glorified between the winged figures and attentive canids. Therefore, the deceased is not only placed in an unmistakably indigenous funerary environment on a bier of mummification, he is also shown as a participant in the traditional Egyptian process of rebirth.

### *Hall of Caracalla*

The belief of the Alexandrian elite in Egyptian religion can be seen even more clearly in tombs that deliberately display traditional funerary imagery alongside classical scenes. This can be seen strikingly in the Hall of Caracalla, which was used from the first to third centuries CE and is tentatively identified as the latest funerary space in this corpus. The hall contains two closely similar burial niches that display a concurrence of classical and indigenous imagery comparable to that seen in the proximity of the

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<sup>134</sup> Walker 2000c, 47; Dunand, Lichtenberg, and Lorton 2006, 80.

Macedonian fresco of the early Ptolemaic Mustapha Pasha tomb discussed above to the tomb's Egyptian sphinxes discussed below (see Figs 3.54, 3.55). Known as the "Persephone Tombs" and thought to have been painted in the late first to early second centuries CE on stylistic grounds,<sup>135</sup> the niches are painted on their sides and back walls. They have suffered heavy damage, and the back wall paintings are so decayed that they can only be recorded in ultraviolet light.

Each wall painting consists of two registers separated by a black line, with each register consisting of a single scene. The upper registers depict typical Egyptian embalming scenes, comparable with that in the main tomb at Kom el-Shuqafa (see Fig. 3.39). The deceased is shown as a mummy, laid out on a lion-form bier being anointed by Anubis who stands on a plinth in the centre behind the mummy. The bier is flanked by two goddesses, Isis and Nephthys (seen clearly in Tomb 1), and standing behind them are two male figures, one with the head of a hawk, both wearing the double crown and saluting the deities and the deceased. These images are notable not only in that they depict a traditional ritual scene, but also in how closely they approximate Egyptian modes. While deviations from convention in Tomb 1, such as the omission of two canopic jars and the unusual headdress of Anubis, might suggest a lack of thorough familiarity with indigenous prototypes, the correct inclusion of all four canopic jars in Tomb 2 shows that 'incorrect' features were probably deliberate artistic choices.

That the presence of traditional sacred scenes in Alexandrian tombs indicates the patron's adherence to Egyptian mortuary religion is compellingly supported by the lower registers of the Persephone Tombs. In both tombs, the lower half of the back wall painting depicts a purely classical subject – the abduction of Persephone – executed in a classical style. The painting in Tomb 2 shows the goddess being carried off to the right by Hades in a chariot pulled by four horses, observed by Artemis, Athena, and Aphrodite to the left. In Tomb 1, the right hand side of the lower scene has been destroyed, but the three goddesses are visible on the left, and the right half almost certainly also showed the abduction.

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<sup>135</sup> Guimier-Sorbets and Seif el-Din 1997, 405.

The choice to include the abduction of Persephone follows a long tradition in funerary settings. One of the most striking examples is a fresco found at Vergina in Macedonia (see Fig. 3.56), in a tumulus-style tomb of the fourth century BCE near that purportedly belonging to Philip II, the father of Alexandria's founder Alexander the Great.<sup>136</sup> The theme of Persephone, who was snatched away to the Underworld only to return every year, was strongly linked in Hellenistic thought to the concept of victory over death. Similarly, the traditional Egyptian embalming scene shows the deceased being preserved by the hand of a deity, defying the ravaging effects of death and enabling the dead to be received into the presence of the gods. Both scenes thus convey messages of rebirth and provide comfort by rejecting the finality of death, as imagined in traditional Greek thought, through narratives acted out by divine counterparts.

The arrangement of the Egyptian scenes in the upper register of the Persephone tombs invites comparison to the classical mythological scenes below. This relationship is underscored by contemporary associations of deities in the two traditions, in which Osiris was equated with Hades, Isis with Aphrodite and Demeter, and Thoth with Hermes.<sup>137</sup> These associations indicate that the two scenes in each niche are meant to be understood as direct parallels to each other.

The arrangement of these scenes in a parallel composition does not give visual weight to the classical imagery. Indeed, according to Egyptian tradition in which registers demarcated levels of status in ascending order (with gods placed above humans and royalty above commoners), the Egyptian scene is given precedence by being placed in the upper register.<sup>138</sup> These tombs show not only the easy coexistence of the two ideologies, but also that the Egyptian religious tradition was adhered to along with the classical, and was at times even given priority, at least in funerary contexts, into the second century CE.

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<sup>136</sup> Andronikos 1994, 59-66.

<sup>137</sup> Tallet and Zivie-Coche 2012, 443.

<sup>138</sup> Robins 1994a, 36.

### *Other Egyptianising Motifs*

The religious significance of the scenes discussed above, along with the concurrence of Egyptian and classical funerary imagery, shows that other Egyptianising elements in Alexandrian tombs were not irrelevant decorative features but genuine indications of religious sentiment. This inclusion of indigenous religious symbolism in the narrative scenes, as well as the juxtaposition of Egyptian imagery with the purely classical, is also seen in individual motifs making up the rest of the décor of the tombs. Examination of these features rounds out consideration of the significance of Alexandrian tomb iconography.

### *Solar Disks*

A widespread traditional motif in the tombs of Alexandria is the winged solar disk, an indigenous device often associated with the gods Horus and Ra.<sup>139</sup> It is most frequently found on a cornice in a pediment above a doorway, or above a burial niche where it hovers in protection over the deceased. An example can be seen in the segmental pediment above the doorway between rooms 1 and 2 in Anfushy Tomb 2 (see Fig. 3.31). Although here the wings cannot be seen clearly, their original presence can be understood from comparison with other Alexandrian tombs. Winged sun disks were reported in the early Ptolemaic tombs of Ezbet el-Makhlouf in the necropolis of Hadra and in the Fort Saleh Triclinium Tomb from Gabbari, dated to the first century BCE; all these are now lost.<sup>140</sup> While the style of these vanished examples cannot be analysed, other sun disks, such as those on the back wall of the central niche of the Tigrane Tomb, and in the tympanum of the Stagni tomb at Kom el-Shuqafa, show the traditional motif in a non-traditional style (see Figs 3.3, 3.34). While the image includes the proper elements – a disk, a pair of rearing serpent heads or uraei, and layered feathered wings, the crisp, careful lines of the ancient Egyptian style are replaced by asymmetrical, free-hand renderings that are closer to classical naturalism. Nevertheless, the presence of the sun

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<sup>139</sup> Griffiths 1980, 54; Barta 1984, 157.

<sup>140</sup> Venit 2002b, 25, 197.

disk, especially over doorways, links the tombs to Egyptian religious beliefs. The winged sun disk was used on royal monuments and especially in temples in liminal locations. It was placed over doorways and sometimes on ceilings along the temple axis, indicating the path of sunlight through the complex<sup>141</sup> – a concept associated with rebirth and eternal life (see Fig. 3.33).<sup>142</sup> The use of this motif in an Alexandrian tomb therefore both invites a direct comparison with Egyptian ritual spaces, and identifies the space with the solar cycle and its connections with rebirth, an intrinsic part of the Egyptian belief in an afterlife. In the case of sun disks over doorways in Alexandrian tombs, it may be that the tomb designers were simply copying a stylistic template of door architecture that included the sun disk, and therefore were not conscious of its ideological associations. However, they also used the motif separate from doorways and in contexts appropriate to its traditional ritualistic meaning, such as above the body of the deceased (Fig. 3.31). This lends support to the possibility that the designers were aware of at least some level of meaning in the motifs that they used.

### *Apotropaic Images*

#### Sphinxes

As referred to above, the simultaneous depiction of Egyptian and classical imagery in the Roman period Persephone tombs was preceded in Tomb 1 at Mustapha Pasha. In the courtyard of the tomb, directly beneath the Macedonian fresco along the south wall, three doors are flanked by six freestanding plinths of medium height, each of which once supported a sphinx (see Fig. 3.25).<sup>143</sup> Despite heavy damage, it is clear that the five surviving sphinxes had the traditional form of a recumbent lion with the head of a man wearing a nemes. While damage to the images could obscure elements that would have imparted a less traditional character to the statues, they are distinct from the non-funerary Greek concept of a sphinx as a winged lion with the head and breasts of a woman and appear to be authentic examples of an indigenous form. The position of these

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<sup>141</sup> Arnold 1999, 25-26.

<sup>142</sup> Taylor 2001, 28-31.

<sup>143</sup> Adriani 1936, 35, fig. 16; Venit 2002b, 54, figs 40-41.

images on freestanding plinths (i.e. detached from the walls behind) may even suggest that they were brought from an indigenous source for reuse in this tomb, although this has been disputed due to their small size.<sup>144</sup>

Although the effect of the composition is quite unlike a traditional Egyptian tomb, their placement facing out before the doorways leading to the inner burial chamber is consistent with their indigenous funerary connotations as guardians of the dead. The significance of the Egyptian sphinx as a guardian is indicated by texts from the New Kingdom, and is most famously exemplified in the Great Sphinx at Giza, as postulated by Selim Hassan.<sup>145</sup> Zivie-Coche has challenged this observation with regard to the Great Sphinx, objecting that the texts from which Hassan's conclusions were drawn would not necessarily have applied at the time of the monument's construction in the Old Kingdom.<sup>146</sup> Be that as it may, the later understanding of the sphinx as a guardian of tombs could have applied to the sculptures at Mustapha Pasha. Hellenic-form sphinxes also appear in guardian roles in Greek and Macedonian funerary art; this can be seen in the fourth-century tumulus tomb currently being excavated at Amphipolis, Macedonia, where two monumental winged lions with women's heads were placed above the primary entrance.<sup>147</sup> Despite this similar association in both cultures, however, the fully indigenous form of the Mustapha Pasha sphinxes first and foremost emphasises their link to Egyptian culture.

The entrant facing the sphinxes and fresco from the primary vantage point of this tomb is thus presented with a remarkably deliberate display of different traditions, both stylistic and religious (see Fig. 3.29). Like Anfushy Tomb 2, the Mustapha Pasha tomb is known to have undergone renovation and redecoration over the centuries of its use as indicated, for example, by the detached plinths on which the sphinxes crouch. Even though the sphinxes probably were not installed when the fresco was painted, it is clear that, at least by the final phase of the tomb's development, the patron was content to

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<sup>144</sup> Libonati 2012, personal communication.

<sup>145</sup> Hassan 1953, 127-56.

<sup>146</sup> Zivie-Coche 2002, 37.

<sup>147</sup> "The Sphinxes." *The Amphipolis Tomb*. <http://www.theamphipolistomb.com/sphinxes>

display them contiguously. It seems, therefore, that the adoption of Egyptian funerary beliefs need not have replaced the Hellenic beliefs of Alexandrian tomb owners, but rather that the two coexisted comfortably. Religious concepts as embodied by the Egyptian sphinxes and those represented by the Macedonian fresco must ultimately have been viewed with equal respect.

### Anubis

The apotropaic significance of the Mustapha Pasha sphinxes is paralleled in the Roman period by two relief sculptures in the main tomb at Kom el-Shuqafa, which present another motif associated with Egyptian funerary cult.<sup>148</sup> These depict the Egyptian jackal-god Anubis in Romanising military dress, while the head of the left-facing figure is shown with the right side of its muzzle just discernible in classical three-quarter perspective (see Figs 3.36, 3.37). These hybrid representations of Anubis echo a contemporary tradition of bronze statuettes and seem to derive from an Alexandrian tradition of depicting Egyptian gods, including Horus, Harpocrates, and Bes, in armour.<sup>149</sup> The inclusion of the two apotropaic Kom el-Shuqafa figures in a funerary context is paralleled in the Roman-period Stagni tomb, where Anubis, in the armour of a Roman legionary, is painted in classical *contrapposto* on the inner right door jamb of the naos-shaped sarcophagus niche, below the classicising sun-disk (see Fig. 3.38).<sup>150</sup> Despite the classicising mode of all three of these images, the basic iconography of Anubis with the head of a jackal and a human body derives from an Egyptian form. Furthermore, the right-hand Kom el-Shuqafa Anubis is crowned with a sun disk and wears a tripartite wig, traditional motifs associated with Egyptian deities, while the figure on the left wears an *atef* crown and grasps a long folded cloth. A shorter form of this cloth was a traditional mark of distinction, though not usually used for gods;<sup>151</sup> thus, in this case it may represent the long strips of cloth bandages used to wrap the mummy, as

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<sup>148</sup> Venit 2002b, 143-45, figs 123, 125.

<sup>149</sup> Grenier 1977, 37-39.

<sup>150</sup> Venit 2002b, 144, fig. 124.

<sup>151</sup> Fischer 1975, 14-21.

seen in the Sieglin tomb discussed above. Either way, despite their hybrid character, these images do not disguise their indigenous origins.

### Snakes

In a deviation from both classical and Egyptian conventions, the left-hand Anubis does not have human legs but the coiled tail of a snake. This detail identifies him with the *Agathos Daimon*, the protective Alexandrian snake deity commonly viewed as a manifestation of Serapis,<sup>152</sup> and links Anubis closely with this most Alexandrian of gods. Other gods could be portrayed with snake tails in Alexandrian art, including Isis and Dionysus.<sup>153</sup> However, the Anubis figures also evoke the various manifestations of snakes as guardians in Egyptian mythology, particularly represented in the tale, recorded in the Ptolemaic Papyrus Jumilhac, of Anubis' transformation into snake form to combat the god Seth.<sup>154</sup> Thus, while the figures display the influence of both classical and Egyptian art, the most significant part of their potency as protective images in a funerary context derives from indigenous tradition.

While the combination of motifs and modes in these images might appear arbitrary, the decision to include Anubis is significant. This is made clear by the placement of all three images – the two reliefs from Kom el-Shuqafa and one surviving painting at Stagni – on the jambs of the innermost doorway of the tomb, their heads turned toward the opening, in a placement similar to the protective sphinxes before the inner doorways of Mustapha Pasha Tomb 1. In Egyptian religious tradition, Anubis was the guardian of the dead who preserved the body, enabling the resurrection of the dead, and guided the deceased through the Underworld to the Hall of Judgment.<sup>155</sup> Shown armed, the three Alexandrian Anubises stand guard at the access point of the crypt, protecting the mummy within. As noted above, Anubis was a familiar figure in Alexandrian religious imagery, and he was described in Greek texts as holding the keys

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<sup>152</sup> Dunand 1969, 36-37, fig. 10; Empereur 1998, 160.

<sup>153</sup> Bailey 2007, 266.

<sup>154</sup> Grenier 1977, 38-39; P. Jumilhac 13.19-20; 14.2-3.

<sup>155</sup> Taylor 2001, 37.

to the Underworld,<sup>156</sup> a non-indigenous notion echoed in painted door keys and locks depicted on loculus slabs. In light of this detail, the significance of Anubis' appearance on these door lintels may be explained in part by the liminality of this location. Regardless of how indirectly the significance of these figures may have been transmitted, it is clear that the commissioner of the Kom el-Shuqafa Main Tomb was in part calling on the traditional apotropaic role of these images, which was further emphasised through the addition of Roman martial attributes.

### *Ritually Significant Features*

Also telling are the statues that flank the inner doorway of the main tomb at Kom el-Shuqafa (see Figs 3.50 a, b).<sup>157</sup> Dated to the Flavian period (69-98 AD) by virtue of the closely datable hairstyle of the female figure,<sup>158</sup> the figures feature Roman-style portrait heads surmounting bodies clothed in Egyptian garments and posed in the canonical Egyptian stance. The contemporary hairstyles and portrait-type heads indicate that these figures represented non-divine individuals and thus are almost certainly portrayals of the tomb owners. Despite the classical style of their heads, the inclusion of large statues of the deceased in a tomb is not a classical tradition. Their presence here is instead significantly comparable to the placement of statues of the deceased in indigenous Egyptian tombs, where they functioned as a manifestation of the deceased both more durable and more accessible than the mummy.<sup>159</sup> In this context, statues were a focus of the Egyptian mortuary cult, including rituals such as the opening of the mouth ceremony that symbolically restored breath to the deceased by bringing the statue to life. Such statues were thus a key stage in the process of rebirth.<sup>160</sup>

If the Kom el-Shuqafa statues were intended for this purpose, this tomb must have been used for the performance of traditional rituals requiring the participation of an

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<sup>156</sup> Morenz and Keep 1973, 249-50.

<sup>157</sup> Venit 2002b, 129, figs 108-10.

<sup>158</sup> Venit 2002b, 129-31; Empereur 1995, 4.

<sup>159</sup> Zivie-Coche 2004, 170.

<sup>160</sup> Quirke 1992, 93-94; Dunand and Zivie-Coche 2004, 170.

Egyptian priest. This is supported by two reliefs on the side walls of the central niche showing two indigenous priests making offerings before Egyptian-style deities (see Figs 3.42, 3.43).<sup>161</sup> The inclusion of altars or offering tables, such as those seen in the courts of the Shatby Hypogeum A, Mustapha Pasha Tomb 1, and the Hall of Caracalla further supports the performance of rituals within Alexandrian tomb complexes (see Figs 3.17, 3.2, 3.29). This stands in sharp contrast to Greek practice in which funerary altars were placed above ground in cemeteries, and even then infrequently until the later periods.<sup>162</sup> Although the nature of the rituals that formed a part of Alexandrian funerals cannot be known, if they involved Egyptian priests then these reliefs are not merely Egyptianising but should be understood as meaningful scenes perpetuating indigenous events performed in this Graeco-Roman architectural environment.

### ***Funerary Iconography and the Adoption of Beliefs***

The iconography of Alexandrian tombs is a powerful indication that the city's elite both revered Egyptian beliefs and had partially adopted certain indigenous funerary practices. However, it could be imagined that over a long period an occupying foreign population might absorb local customs and religion largely subconsciously, resulting in a slow infiltration of indigenous religious imagery into private expressions of belief. If this were the case, and the ruling stratum of society was largely unaware of how many of its practices derived from traditional religion, the status of indigenous religious culture might not have been affected. However, the concurrence of Egyptian funerary imagery with classical scenes and motifs, such as that seen in the courtyard of Mustapha Pasha Tomb 1 and the Persephone tombs, shows that the Alexandrian elite were conscious of this absorption and included indigenous religious imagery in their tombs as a purposeful expression of indigenous beliefs, concurrent with, yet distinct from classical traditions.

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<sup>161</sup> Empereur 1995, 5.

<sup>162</sup> See Yavis 1949, 141, 147 no. 44, 172; Barber 2006, 39.

Furthermore, it is clear from the scenes discussed above that the inclusion of Egyptian religious imagery was probably accompanied by the practice of mummification in some cases. Together, these elements show significant engagement with Egyptian funerary traditions. Lustration scenes such as those at Kom el-Shuqafa, the Tigrane Tomb, and the Persephone tombs, which are positioned directly over the *kline*/sarcophagus of the deceased, strongly imply that the person buried there would have been ideally interred as a mummy. The inclusion of details such as rhomboid bandaging and canopic jars further suggests that the body was meant to have undergone a full embalming process according to the traditional manner. The rapid decay of organic material in the humidity and waterlogged soil of Alexandria has ensured that very few mummies from the city have survived. However, in the absence of widespread physical evidence for mummification, the iconographic evidence for the practice indicates that the Alexandrian elite adopted Egyptian beliefs in an afterlife.

### **3.4. Alexandrian Funerary Spaces: Conclusions**

From its founding in 331 BCE, Alexandria stood largely separate from the rest of the country demographically, administratively, and culturally; yet, it was the largest city and capital of Egypt, and the country's principal cultural centre throughout the Ptolemaic and Roman periods. Any information that can be gathered from the city's remains is thus highly significant for the study of the ruling stratum of society, and relates to circumstances within the country as a whole. The fact that wealthy Alexandrians frequently included traditional Egyptian elements in the design and décor of their tombs is extremely important for understanding the wider status of indigenous Egyptian culture and religion in the period; however, the issue contains several complicating factors. These include questions of chronological patterns, transmission, the character of Egyptianising imagery, and identity of the tomb owners.

### *Chronological Patterns?*

In this chapter, I have presented the evidence in approximate chronological order; yet, it is extremely difficult to discern patterns of developments in the décor of tombs. The programme of wall-painting at Anfushy demonstrates a clear change from an earlier Greek decorative scheme of painted zones to an Egyptianising tilework scheme around the mid-first century BCE. This introduction may have been long preceded by the sphinxes that appear in the third-century BCE Tomb 1 at Mustapha Pasha, while overtly classical scenes continued to be used as late as the end of the first or beginning of the second century CE, as in the Persephone Tombs in which they appear parallel with Egyptian ones. Thus, a straightforward progression from the preference for classical motifs to indigenous Egyptian motifs cannot be demonstrated. The same absence of a clear pattern is evident in tomb structures, burial types, and architectural details. The classical Alabaster Tomb must have been built alongside Egyptian-inspired rock-cut hypogea, which themselves used Greek architectural orders. Cremation, inhumation, and mummification were also practised largely concurrently, as demonstrated for example by the discovery of cinerary urns and spaces for the interment of corpses in the Wardian tomb, as well as the historical references to mummy-workshops referenced above. Furthermore, the change from the painted Greek zone style to the Egyptian tilework design in Anfushy Tomb 2 occurred apparently within the space of a century. Thus, although material culture is commonly defined by the study of stylistic development over time, the haphazard temporal distribution of cultural motifs and modes in Alexandrian tombs does not permit the identification of clear trends.

If no straightforward evolution can be identified, a more subtle and complex pattern might be discerned, such as a stronger tendency to mix motifs and modes in the Roman period. This might be seen in the complex scenes at Kom el-Shuqafa and the Tigrane and Persephone tombs. Yet there is the additional difficulty that the surviving Alexandrian hypogea constitute a very small proportion of the original necropoleis, and their chronological distribution of the styles of these examples could be a matter of chance.

The most that can be observed from the chronology of the tombs considered above is that a greater number of Egyptianising scenes that derive from indigenous funerary religion survive from the Roman period than from the Ptolemaic. Due to the narrowness of the sample size, it cannot be stated definitively from this that Alexandrians adhered to Egyptian religion more emphatically during this time than before. Nevertheless, the higher prevalence of such scenes in later tombs may indicate that adoption of Egyptian religion became more widespread during the Roman period. At the very least, it is certain that Egyptian religious culture was not marginalised in Alexandrian society after the fall of the Ptolemies.

Instead of identifying precise chronological patterns, I would argue that Alexandrian burials are best understood as exhibiting a marked eclecticism. Throughout the Ptolemaic and Roman periods, Egyptian and classical traditions were part of a broad range of funerary options from which elite Alexandrians could pick and choose. Furthermore, in the multicultural environment of Alexandria, it clear that their options would not have been restricted to these two traditions alone; this can be seen strikingly in a loculus slab from Plinthine, a site forty kilometres west of Alexandria, that combines an Egyptian doorway and Horus falcons with what appear to be Nabataean-style columns.<sup>163</sup> Yet, far from diminishing the significance of Egyptian religious beliefs in Alexandria, this perspective suggests that tomb owners did not simply conform to a dominant cultural trend or choose certain motifs from a lack of other options, but selected these images for their symbolic value and religious meaning.

It might equally be observed that, more than the wholesale adoption of an indigenous set of practices, the mixing of traditions seen in Alexandrian tombs should be seen as indicating the development of an original funerary practice specific to the region. This might be seen in the elite tombs found in sites around Alexandria, such as at Marina el-Alamein to the west of the city,<sup>164</sup> which follow similar plans as Alexandrian hypogea. It seems clear that almost no Alexandrian represented in the evidence considered here

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<sup>163</sup> Adriani 1952, 140-41; Venit 2002b, 169-70, fig. 145.

<sup>164</sup> Venit 2002b, 170-71, figs 146-47.

would have adopted indigenous rites in full, to the extent that no distinction might have been made between their own funeral rituals and pharaonic practices. The Alexandrian mix of traditions might therefore very well be defined as a newly developed local practice. However, I argue that the primary significance of this evidence for the status of indigenous religious culture lies in the deep interest in and respect for indigenous motifs and practices demonstrated by the frequency and parity with which they were used in elite Alexandrian burials, regardless of the concurrent presence of other influences.

***Transmission of Indigenous Influences: Tomb Design and Décor***

It is next necessary to consider how these traditional conventions were transmitted to the Alexandrian urban elite. From my argument it is clear that the forms of earlier indigenous tombs exerted influence across geographical and chronological distances, resulting in the development of similarities between the spatial layouts of traditional Egyptian funerary spaces and of later Alexandrian hypogea. In a country characterised by common riverine travel and in a period noted for ease of communication, the transmission of aesthetic influences is not difficult to imagine. Nearly every major urban centre (not to mention the many villages) was located along the banks of the Nile and its branches, which were easily navigable all the way to Alexandria, as shown for example by the massive amounts of grain exported from the Egyptian hinterland to Rome via the Alexandrian port.<sup>165</sup> The transmission of the relevant knowledge and construction expertise was clearly permitted by Egypt's geography, upholding the idea that the underground, rock-cut tombs of Alexandria owe their design primarily to the influence of indigenous prototypes. Being partially designed to attract and accommodate visitors bearing offerings, many indigenous tombs were on display for some generations after their construction.<sup>166</sup> Therefore, the centuries that often separate the two groups do not necessarily pose an obstacle to the transmission of

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<sup>165</sup> *Epitome de Caesaribus* 1.6; Josephus 2.16.4; Rickman 1980, 113-18; 231-35.

<sup>166</sup> Snape 2011, 39-41, 44-45.

forms; the existence of complexes still in use at more or less the same time as their Alexandrian counterparts circumvents this problem even more easily.

As with the forms of the tombs themselves, the means by which indigenous aesthetic ideas and forms may have been transmitted to the classically trained Alexandrian artists who decorated these spaces must also be considered. Regarding the Ptolemaic temples at Philae, Eleni Vassilika argues that the enormously complex *grammaire du temple* shows that textual pattern books and possibly graphic cartoons detailing the intricacies of these conventions must have been used.<sup>167</sup> Roger Ling has also discussed the existence of pattern books, or compendiums of cartoons recording forms, scenes, and motifs that would have enabled artists to reproduce both well-known works by old masters and antique styles, with regard to wall paintings in Rome, such as the second century BCE-first century CE frescoes preserved in domestic contexts at Pompeii. Such books could also account for similarities in form and design between disparate works.<sup>168</sup> Peter Stewart, considering the social context of Roman art, accepts that such pattern books may have existed, but cautions that there is very little evidence to support this concept.<sup>169</sup> Ling, however, counters this by citing the first century CE literary accounts of Quintilian and Pliny the Elder,<sup>170</sup> as well as a late second/early third century CE Roman funerary relief from Sens in France, which seems to depict an artist consulting a copy-scroll while creating a wall painting.<sup>171</sup>

The relevance of these Roman examples to the question of artistic communication in Egypt is supported by a number of drawings preserved on papyrus, including a first century CE papyrus from Antaeopolis in Upper Egypt known as the Artemidorus Papyrus.<sup>172</sup> This controversial document includes a Greek text, a map and strikingly,

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<sup>167</sup> Vassilika 1989, 7-11.

<sup>168</sup> Ling 1991, 128-34, 217-20.

<sup>169</sup> Stewart 2008, 36-37.

<sup>170</sup> Pliny the Elder 35.68; Quintilian 10.2.6.

<sup>171</sup> Uffler 1971, 394-401, figs 1-3.

<sup>172</sup> Ling 2009, 602-03.

several artists' sketches of animals, anatomical studies, and portrait heads.<sup>173</sup> Another potential "pattern" sheet is a late 1st century CE papyrus from Oxyrhynchus bearing an architectural line drawing of Corinthian columns and a frieze, although it has been argued that its small size would have made it unsuitable to be used as a design sheet by a mason.<sup>174</sup> Other documents more clearly imply practical use, such as a second century CE papyrus found at Oxyrhynchus outlining a ground plan for a house.<sup>175</sup> Similarly, the third century CE Zenon archive includes evidence of "style samples" provided by the Alexandrian painter Theophilos, who was contracted by Zenon as a decorator.<sup>176</sup> This not only demonstrates the use of portable copy-images in interior design but also raises the question of itinerant artists transporting images between Egypt's cities and towns.

These documents do not prove the deliberate use of physical templates in the production of Alexandrian funerary art, and the use of pattern books is not fully accepted by scholars. However, the documents do demonstrate the existence of such images and suggest that they could have been used in such a way.<sup>177</sup> Institutions such as the famous Library of Alexandria and its daughter library at the Serapeum would have made Alexandria an optimal hub for the acquisition and dissemination of such information.<sup>178</sup> In a country characterised by the widespread availability of papyrus and the prevalence of its use for record-keeping and correspondence, it is conceivable that traditional motifs and scenes were transmitted to Alexandrian artisans via pattern-books.

### *Character of Egyptianising Imagery: Not Chinoiserie*

It is next necessary to consider the intrinsic character of the Egyptian motifs and modes examined above. The presence of Egyptian elements in Alexandrian funerary art has been linked with Egyptianising imagery such as Egyptian-style statue types at Rome,

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<sup>173</sup> Gallazzi and Kramer 1998, 201-07, figs 3-4; Gallazzi et al. 2008, 482-93, table 1; Settis 2008, 98-106, figs 57-64, 71. For details of the controversy see Billerbeck in Brodersen and Elsner 2009, 65-81.

<sup>174</sup> See McKenzie 2007, 226-27, fig. 399; Coulton's discussion in Whitehouse 2007, 304-06.

<sup>175</sup> P. Oxy. 24.2406.

<sup>176</sup> P.Cair. Zen. 3.59445; Nowicka 1984, 256-59.

<sup>177</sup> Elsner in Brodersen and Elsner 2009, 35-50.

<sup>178</sup> Bagnall 2002, 348-62; el-Abbadi 2004, 167-83; McKenzie 2007, 50.

as well as pharaonic monuments such as obelisks that were shipped in to ornament the city in contexts far removed from their original connotations.<sup>179</sup> Modern parallels to this phenomenon with no creditable religious overtones include the importation of three Egyptian obelisks to London, Paris, and New York in the nineteenth century. A closer comparison might be seen in Nilotic Roman wall paintings that became popular after the conquest of Egypt after 30 BCE, and which Helen Whitehouse describes as paralleling the phenomenon of chinoiserie in more recent European art.<sup>180</sup> If this is the case in Alexandria, the presence of traditional Egyptian elements in the city's tombs might show simply that the designer was adhering to a prevailing decorative mode, irrespective of the symbolic implications of the images chosen. Such an interpretation is linked to the role of the tomb as a staging ground used by the living. In elite society, a funeral would have been a momentous public event reflective of the family's status, cultural affiliations, and personal piety. In this context, questions of fashion and public show are rightly taken into consideration. However, while it is valid to consider Alexandrian funerary art partially through this lens, I argue that the presence of traditional Egyptian features in Alexandrian tombs stemmed primarily from deeper motivating factors. Images intended to accompany an individual in death would not only viewed on the occasion of a funeral but would also be encountered by those who came to pay their respects in the future. They would thus be permanently associated with the memory of that person and their family. Therefore, these images must have been selected with great care, either by the deceased before death or by the family. Furthermore, the communal, multigenerational nature of many Alexandrian tombs shows that a number of people were simultaneously willing to adopt Egyptianising imagery. Whether questions of design were decided by an individual or a group, the seriousness and finality of the funerary context suggests that the images would have been chosen thoughtfully and deliberately.

Due to the gravity of its context, the choice of imagery for an elite funerary environment should be understood as a highly significant manifestation of the attitude of

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<sup>179</sup> See De Caro 2006; McKenzie 2007, 79.

<sup>180</sup> Whitehouse 2010, 1021.

the society that produced it. I therefore reject the view that decisions to include an image in a tomb were based purely on dictates of fashion. Instead, I argue that the imagery in these tombs reflects the most fundamental elements of that society's private inclinations and should be taken as significant evidence of cultural engagement.

### *Identity of the Tomb Owners*

Finally, it is necessary to consider the identity of those responsible for the design of Alexandrian tombs. The owners of a tomb would likely have chosen its basic imagery and the finished space must have been at least approved by those who paid for it. It must therefore have accorded in some way with their beliefs.

Whether this belief was tied in some way to the ethnicity and cultures with which the tomb owners might have identified in life is extremely difficult to ascertain. The question has been dealt with at length with regard to mummy portraits,<sup>181</sup> which show the subject in a composite form with Roman-style portrait heads and Egyptian-style bodies (bandaged mummies), similar to the two Flavian statues at Kom el-Shuqafa. This mix of iconographic traditions suggests a corresponding combination of culture, in which classical and Egyptian traditions blended to become a hybrid entity. Yet, while it is tempting to regard funerary evidence as reflecting the culture and religion with which the deceased identified in life, members of the Alexandrian elite may have chosen to emphasise different cultural affinities in different contexts. That is to say, they could easily have led lives largely indistinguishable from their contemporaries in Rome while choosing to be buried in an Egyptian manner and environment. Be that as it may, it is clear that the owners of Egyptian-inspired tombs must have engaged with indigenous tradition at least in their funerary preparations.

In Alexandria's early years, a sizeable percentage of the population would have been of Hellenic extraction, as shown by the many Ptolemaic urns (Hadra vases) whose inscriptions state the Aegean origins of the deceased.<sup>182</sup> Accordingly, the early classically

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<sup>181</sup> See Bierbrier 1997; Walker 2000a.

<sup>182</sup> Enklaar 1985, 145; Venit 2002b, 10.

influenced Tomb 1 at Mustapha Pasha may have been originally used by wealthy people of Greek extraction. However, over generations of intermarriage, the population became increasingly more mixed, and by the Roman period it is extremely difficult to guess the ethnicity of an Alexandrian. Since some of the highest officials of the Roman administration came from Italy to take up their posts,<sup>183</sup> the super-elite owners of the monumental tomb at Kom el-Shuqafa might have identified as Roman by blood. However this is very uncertain and it is essentially impossible to determine the ethnicity of owners of less grand tombs. For the purposes of this chapter, it is sufficient to observe that the owners of Alexandrian tombs must have been wealthy inhabitants of the city who, despite an affinity for classical culture, at least partly embraced Egyptian religious beliefs in death.

#### *Alexandrian Funerary Art and the Status of Egyptian Religious Culture*

At the beginning of this chapter I asked what the inclusion of traditional artistic forms and designs in Alexandrian tombs can say about the status of indigenous religious culture during the period when they were constructed. The presence of traditional religious images in the most elaborate tombs of Egypt's Hellenistic capital city implies that observance of indigenous funerary traditions in the Ptolemaic and Roman periods was not restricted to culturally conservative ethnic Egyptians. The fact that indigenous Egyptian motifs were desirable tomb décor for those who could afford such display demonstrates that Egyptian culture permeated Alexandrian society as far as its uppermost echelons. While the tombs must reflect the aesthetic taste of the individuals involved, the design of such a solemnly significant space was surely influenced by considerations of religious symbolism and belief in the power of these images far more than by current fashion. Accurate renderings of traditional funerary scenes, particularly those that assured rebirth and an afterlife, show that, at least in death, wealthy Alexandrians chose to rely on traditional Egyptian belief systems that could offer hope of renewed life, rather than on the more finite view of traditional Hellenic religion. While they may not have been

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<sup>183</sup> Huzar 1988, 359; Herklotz 2012, 15.

always concerned with precision in details or with overall adherence to an indigenous mode, it is clear that many wealthy Alexandrians valued traditional motifs for their sacred connotations and employed this imagery in tandem with their adoption of related beliefs.

I have described how Alexandrian burials shifted from simple graves surmounted by stelae in the Greek tradition to monumental, rock-cut hypogea most closely comparable to the chambered tombs that housed the dead in pharaonic Egypt, an expensive change that points toward an early assimilation of indigenous beliefs. This assimilation is also visible in architectural features of the tombs such as the rendering of a false door in Tomb 2 at Anfushy (see Fig. 3.22). Located at the focal point of the tomb in keeping with indigenous tradition, this door demonstrates the adoption both of Egyptian artistic forms and of indigenous narratives of death.

In addition to tomb design and architectural features, elements such as paintings and free-standing sculpture in the tombs display the influence of indigenous sacred thought. The conscious transcription of indigenous funerary scenes in wall paintings and reliefs whose composition clearly derives from pharaonic prototypes demonstrates that the tomb owners engaged with the indigenous narratives of death played out in these compositions. Furthermore, visual references to mummification and depictions of Egyptian funerary rituals indicate that the upper stratum of society also participated in performances of traditional religious rites, while elements such as the Flavian statues and the pterephoros relief at Kom el-Shuqafa hint that in doing so they may have directly patronised Egyptian priests as religious officials and spiritual authorities. The eclectic character of Alexandrian tomb design and decoration makes it hard to discern a clear pattern of development over time. Instead, the broadly continuous presence of indigenous sacred elements in the city's tombs indicates that, despite administrative and economic changes, Egyptian religious culture continued to be favoured under Ptolemaic and Roman rule.

Thus, the inclusion of traditional elements and sacred motifs in Alexandrian burials, alongside the evidence for mummification, shows that indigenous religious

customs were both respected and adopted by the Hellenic populace, who not only came to practise Egyptian religion to the extent of embalming the body of the deceased and perhaps patronising the services of Egyptian priests, but could even show greater respect for Egyptian religion than for classical tradition. The evidence of Alexandrian funerary environments therefore clearly supports the argument that indigenous religious culture continued to flourish and enjoy high social status throughout this period, even at Alexandria, the country's foremost Hellenistic centre.



## CHAPTER 4

### Traditional Iconography on the Roman Coins of Alexandria: Official Sanctioning of Indigenous Religious Imagery

#### 4.1. Introduction

Coins are more directly traceable to government involvement than any other form of material evidence. The iconography that appears on them must therefore in some way reflect the attitude of the central administration in a given region. For this reason, I examine the coinage of Egypt to consider what the imagery used can reveal about the status of indigenous Egyptian religious culture during the Roman period.

Despite the wide circulation of coinage throughout the Egyptian countryside, these coins themselves were struck exclusively at the mint of Alexandria.<sup>1</sup> This centralised location of manufacture at the administrative capital and established seat of both the Ptolemaic monarchs and Roman prefects emphasises the production of currency as a government domain, a situation paralleled across the Roman Empire.<sup>2</sup> Since coins were linked to the contemporary administration, the coinage of Egypt is highly significant for the question of this thesis. In contrast to the evidence of monumental construction, hard-stone statues, and Alexandrian tombs that respectively give accounts of the situation from the public and private activity of the indigenous and Hellenic social elite, examination of the coins considers the matter through the lens of the public activity of the Roman administration.

Distinct among other forms of representational media, coin reverse designs are dominated by figures of religious significance, including deities and objects of ritual reverence. This prevalence of sacred imagery is tied to the objective of regional specificity in coin design. Coins were often used to reflect the character of the location where they were produced, and religion was one of the most important elements of

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<sup>1</sup> See e.g. Christiansen 2002, 13, 23; Kraay 1976, 295.

<sup>2</sup> See e.g. Howgego 1992.

regional identity in the ancient world.<sup>3</sup> This body of evidence therefore brings the attitude of the central government toward local religious culture into focus. Specifically, the iconography of Egyptian coin reverses reflects the relationship between the Roman administration and indigenous religious culture.

As is usual for Greek coins, Ptolemaic coin types are highly consistent in motif, and what variation there is sheds little light on the circumstances that influenced the choice of iconography. For this reason, it is not useful to look for indications of administrative attitudes in the coinage of the Ptolemies. On the other hand, the coinage produced in Egypt after the Roman conquest demonstrates a high level of iconographical variability and contingency to current affairs. While this contrast is striking, it is in keeping with the usual differences observed between Greek and Roman coins throughout the Mediterranean. Therefore, I concentrate on the coins of the Roman period to determine what they might reveal about the status of indigenous religious culture in Egypt during this time. I argue that the reverses of Roman coins from Alexandria employ Egyptian religious imagery deliberately, thoughtfully, and with respect. This shows that the Roman administration in Egypt maintained a profitable relationship with indigenous religious culture and its representatives, and that these therefore retained a high social standing after the Roman conquest.

### *Previous Research*

The status of indigenous religious culture and its relationship with the ruling administration after the Roman conquest has not yet been examined from the evidence of the coinage. However, the coins of Roman Egypt and other questions that they elicit have drawn the attention of many. One of the earliest scholars to address the topic in detail was Joseph Vogt whose monumental overview of Alexandrian coin types from Augustus to Diocletian laid the groundwork for the study of Roman coinage in Egypt.<sup>4</sup> He was followed by Joseph Milne, who prefaced his catalogue of Alexandrian coins in the

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<sup>3</sup> Burnett 1991, 25; Howgego 1992, 2; 2007, 2; Millar 1993, 230, 257.

<sup>4</sup> Vogt 1924.

Ashmolean Museum with a detailed introduction to the topic. He believed that the coinage of Roman Egypt was fundamentally unlike any other provincial coinage in the Empire, and that coins only rarely circulated throughout the rest of Egypt outside of Alexandria.<sup>5</sup> Moving forward from Milne's work, Andrew Burnett considered the question of the coinage of Roman Egypt in the context of the Roman world, and although he acknowledges certain characteristics of Egyptian coinage distinguishing it from that of other Roman provinces, he found that the similarities between Egyptian coinage and that of the rest of the Empire are in fact more significant than their differences.<sup>6</sup> A later contribution of Burnett's to the field is a catalogue of Roman Provincial Coinage jointly edited with Michel Amandry and Pere Pau Ripollés, in which the logistics of Roman coin production in Egypt, and details such as denominations and metals used are outlined.<sup>7</sup> More recently, Chris Howgego's study of the supply and use of money in the Roman world examines economic phenomena such as the seasonal nature of cash flow in the Egyptian countryside, confirming that the use of Egyptian coinage was not restricted to Alexandria, citing abundant papyrological evidence of cash transactions in the countryside.<sup>8</sup>

Roger Bland's work on the Roman coinage of Alexandria examines the interplay that he perceives between Roman and Egyptian designs, as well as similarities between patterns of Egyptian coin production and that of Rome and the provinces, thus further upholding Burnett's perception of a connection between Alexandrian and other Roman coinages.<sup>9</sup>

This consideration of coin design types was continued by Soheir Bakhoun, who concentrated particularly on the depiction of Egyptian deities in Roman coinage. She expressed the view that coinage functioned as a vehicle of propaganda for individual emperors, and that the shifting patterns of imagery discernible in the Egyptian

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<sup>5</sup> Milne 1971, 15-16.

<sup>6</sup> Burnett 1991.

<sup>7</sup> Amandry, Burnett, and Ripollés 1992.

<sup>8</sup> Howgego 1992.

<sup>9</sup> Bland 1996.

numismatic record can be attributed to the varying inclinations of successive emperors, who, due to the distinctive isolation of the Egyptian economy, exercised more control over the Alexandrian mint than elsewhere.<sup>10</sup> The question of imperial influences on numismatic iconography, and the extent to which particular administrations dictated the images appearing on coins, was picked up by Carlos Noreña, whose study of the portrayal of virtues on imperial coins and the frequency with which particular concepts appeared emphasises administrative involvement in the choice of design, and further highlights the nature of Roman coins as an official medium.<sup>11</sup>

In the preface to his catalogue of Alexandrian coins, Keith Emmett provides a useful history of Egyptian numismatics, an exposition of the denominations and dating system used, and a detailed exposition of Egyptian nome series, the production of which he perceives as having varied between emperors.<sup>12</sup> He is followed in his work on this subject by Erik Christiansen, whose analysis of single coin finds in Roman Egypt reveals the veritable absence of nome coins found outside of Alexandria, raising compelling questions as to the purpose of these types, and the significance of their imagery.<sup>13</sup> However, the most comprehensive study of nome coins is found in the 2005 article by Angelo Geissen, which not only provides a meticulous description of the types, but also draws attention to the striking level of local knowledge discernible in the iconographical details of the series.<sup>14</sup> Studies of the buildings depicted on Roman coins of Egypt were made by Handler and, most recently, by McKenzie.<sup>15</sup>

### ***Historical Background: Coinage in Egypt before 30 BCE***

While the minting of coins was not an ancient indigenous convention, the use of coinage in one way or another is known in Egypt for at least five hundred years before the Roman conquest. After the arrival of the Persians in 525 BCE, hoards of coins from a

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<sup>10</sup> Bakhoum 1999.

<sup>11</sup> Noreña 2001.

<sup>12</sup> Emmett 2001, xv.

<sup>13</sup> Christiansen 2002, 13.

<sup>14</sup> Geissen 2005.

<sup>15</sup> Handler, 1971; McKenzie 2007, 185-94.

wide range of regions outside of Egypt begin to appear in the archaeological record at sites such as Naukratis, which had been inhabited by Greek mercenaries and merchants from at least the seventh century when coinage came into use in Greece.<sup>16</sup> Such hoards have been interpreted as indicating a marked increase in foreign trade under Persian rule, although the fragmentary nature of the coins implies that they were valued for their silver content and not as tokens of exchange.<sup>17</sup>

The first coin identified as minted in Egypt was issued by the native pharaoh Teos who led a revolt against the Persian ruler Artaxerxes II in 361 and minted a currency of his own to pay his troops.<sup>18</sup> The result was a gold stater bearing the head of Athena on the reverse and, on the obverse, the image of a papyrus plant and owl with the name *Teos* written in Greek (Fig. 4.1). This was followed by a coin minted under the last indigenous pharaoh Nectanebo II (360-343 BCE) depicting a Greek-style horse on the obverse, and the Egyptian hieroglyphs *nub nefer* – “fine gold” – on the reverse (Fig. 4.2). The appearance of these image combinations on the first two known Egyptian coins is striking. The papyrus plant, as seen on the former coin, had been acknowledged as a national symbol of the Nile Delta since at least the thirty-first century BCE, when it was depicted as a regional emblem on the famous palette of Narmer.<sup>19</sup> The coin of Teos, which also features the quintessentially Greek images of an owl and head of Athena (both motifs found on Athenian coinage at this time<sup>20</sup>), is comparable to the coin of Nectanebo II, which simultaneously displays a rearing horse (also a common Greek reverse design<sup>21</sup>) rendered in Greek style, and demonstrates literacy in ancient Egyptian script. These two examples show that Egyptian coinage combined Hellenic and Egyptian imagery from its introduction.

After the defeat of Nectanebo II by the Persians in 342 BCE, these early specimens of Egyptian coinage were succeeded by Persian issues that copied Athenian

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<sup>16</sup> Petrie 1886, 63-64; Vittmann 2003, 211-23.

<sup>17</sup> Kraay 1976, 294; Von Reden 2007, 32.

<sup>18</sup> Kraay 1976, 76.

<sup>19</sup> Robins 2008, 33.

<sup>20</sup> Kraay 1976, 60, 200.

<sup>21</sup> Kraay 1976, 157.

tetradrachms and are distinguished only by the incorporation of inscriptions in Demotic and Aramaic.<sup>22</sup> However, after Alexander's conquest of Egypt in 332 and the introduction of Greek rule that followed, Egyptian coinage entered into a new phase that would persist for nearly three hundred years. A series of gold staters struck by Ptolemy I Soter I in 304, portraying the head of the king on the obverse and a quadriga pulled by elephants on the reverse, was among the first of what would prove to be a consistent but repetitious succession of issues.<sup>23</sup>

The imagery on Ptolemaic coinage quickly stabilised into the form it would follow until the end of the dynasty – the portrait of a king and/or queen on the obverse and the image of a Hellenistic eagle on the reverse (see e.g. Fig. 4.3). The eagle was occasionally replaced by motifs like the figure of a Greek deity such as Zeus, cornucopiae, or lightning bolts, and individualising attributes occasionally differentiate the portraits of successive monarchs.<sup>24</sup> One element indicating Egyptian influence in these coins is the portrayal of Ptolemaic queens as Isis, wearing a distinctive hairstyle of corkscrew curls, and a lotus blossom diadem (see e.g. Figs 4.4, 4.5).<sup>25</sup> However, Isis had thoroughly infiltrated Hellenistic religion by this time, not only within Egypt but throughout the Greek and Italian mainlands as well.<sup>26</sup> In this context, these queenly depictions are not very different from the contemporaneous portrayal of Ptolemaic kings as Zeus.

The coins of Ptolemaic Egypt neither display the same vibrant syncretism seen in the issues of Teos and Nectanebo II, nor reflect contemporary circumstances. Instead, they follow the characteristic Hellenistic convention of adhering closely to an established mode of ornamentation.<sup>27</sup> By contrast, in keeping with the usual variability of Roman coins versus Greek, Alexandrian coins of the Roman period offer a wealth of iconographic information relating directly to the question at hand. This is the body of

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<sup>22</sup> Von Reden 2007, 32.

<sup>23</sup> Von Reden 2007, 39.

<sup>24</sup> Walker and Higgs 2001, 85-87.

<sup>25</sup> Plantzos 2011, 392-97.

<sup>26</sup> See Takács 1995, 269; Heyob 1975, 6.

<sup>27</sup> Howgego 1995, 66.

material that I examine, considering the genre's relationship with the administrative officials who oversaw its production and the religious imagery adorning it.

#### 4.2. Coins of the Roman Period

Due to the large number of coins that survive from the Roman era, it is not possible to attempt an exhaustive analysis of reverse types here. Instead, I discuss a selection of relevant examples representative of the corpus, selecting where possible the most significant and revealing types. The evidence is considered qualitatively, with a specific focus on the reverse designs that ornament the coins, along with the possible implications inherent in the choice of subject matter. The obverses of Roman coins produced during this period invariably depict a portrait of the emperor and/or another member of the royal family, and while these images have been the subject of some discussion,<sup>28</sup> they are most useful to this study as an indicator of date.

Before beginning this analysis, it is necessary to distinguish between the terms *motif* and *style* as used in this chapter. The rendering of reverse imagery on Alexandrian coins in both the Roman and Ptolemaic periods was uniformly classical in style, and no surviving example can be compared exactly to the traditional Egyptian aesthetic still used in indigenous temple decoration at that time. For example, while there are many instances of Egyptian gods depicted in classical poses (see e.g. Fig. 4.39, 140-141 CE), neither Egyptian nor classical deities are portrayed within the two-dimensional representational conventions of indigenous art,<sup>29</sup> with very few possible exceptions (see Fig. 4.6, discussed below). Consequently, the nature of the subject matter does not reward an analysis of differences in style. Instead, this study focuses primarily on variations in motif.

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<sup>28</sup> See e.g. Emmett 2001, xvi.

<sup>29</sup> See e.g. Schäfer 1986, 277-309.

## ***Iconographical Analysis***

### *Classical Types*

In order to appreciate the full significance of indigenous imagery in Roman coin designs, it is essential to note the existence of purely classical coin types displaying no discernible trace of indigenous influence. Indeed, the motifs on many Alexandrian coin reverses are not exclusive to Egypt, but are duplicates of images that appear on the coins of several other regions of the Roman Empire.<sup>30</sup>

### Classical Deities and the Copying of Imperial Types

One representative example of this is the depiction of Homonoia in the coinage of Alexandria. A personification of the Greek idea of unity and cognate with the Roman deity Concordia,<sup>31</sup> Homonoia is portrayed on Egyptian coins as a thoroughly classical goddess. Shown either seated at ease on a low chair or standing contrapposto, she wears a high-waisted chiton draped about her in Hellenistic fashion, and holds variously a cornucopia, an olive branch, or a *patera* (libation vessel). One example that might have been stylistically influenced by traditional Egyptian modes of depiction portrays Homonoia facing left, her face and lower body in profile but her shoulders and torso depicted frontally, recalling indigenous conventions governing representations of the human form in two dimensions (Fig. 4.6, 146-147 CE).<sup>32</sup> Nevertheless, the image gives no other indication of its Egyptian provenance and it is difficult to know to what extent the arrangement is due to traditional influence or simply to the nature of the medium and skill of the engraver. No other example of a classical deity portrayed according to the Egyptian stylistic canon is known.

Homonoia first appears in the Alexandrian numismatic record in 56/7 CE – year 3 of the emperor Nero – and continues to be depicted for nearly 250 years, being last seen in 295/6 – year 11 of Maximian.<sup>33</sup> Yet, despite the frequency and long duration of her

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<sup>30</sup> See Burnett 1991, 28; Geissen 2005, 167.

<sup>31</sup> Clark 2007, 8-10.

<sup>32</sup> See Schäfer 1986, 277-309; Robins 1994b, 13-15.

<sup>33</sup> Milne 1971, 4855.

depiction on Alexandrian coins, Homonoia was not a motif peculiar to Egypt. At the same time as coins with her image were being minted in Alexandria, Homonoia can be seen in nearly identical form on the coins of cities across the Roman East, from Perinthus in Thrace and Corinth in Achaëa, to Smyrna and Pergamum in Asia, and Caesarea in Judaea (e.g. Fig. 4.7, 161-80 CE). Her image, along with many other similar types, demonstrates the extent to which the Roman coinage of Egypt could follow the trends of the wider Roman Empire and shows furthermore that the Alexandrian mint was not obligated to use local iconography.

#### Classical Mythology, and the Production of Series as an Imperial Convention

Another Alexandrian coin motif demonstrating the influence of purely classical sensibilities is that of the Greek hero Heracles. His appearance in the coinage is particularly worthy of notice because he features in one of the most striking groups produced by the Alexandrian mint: a set of twelve images, produced over a span of seven years under Antoninus Pius, from 140/1 to 146/7 CE, depicting the Twelve Labours of Heracles (e.g., Fig. 4.8, 140-141 CE).

The minting of a group of related images is paralleled by similar series both in Egyptian coinage and elsewhere. In year 8 of Antoninus Pius (144-5 CE) a series depicting the twelve signs of the zodiac, both individually and all together, was produced in Alexandria (see e.g. Fig. 4.9). Before this in Rome in 134/5, a series was struck that allegorically depicted Hadrian's tour of the provinces (see e.g. Fig. 4.10), a category of types that can be compared with the Alexandrian series, at least conceptually.

Like the zodiac and tour series, the "Labours" coins have attracted attention due to their distinctiveness and interconnection,<sup>34</sup> but Heracles was also frequently depicted alone on Alexandrian coins, characterised simply by his traditional attributes: a lion-skin and club (see e.g. Fig. 4.11, 144-145 CE). Like many other classical gods, Heracles was widely worshipped in Hellenic city centres throughout Egypt, as indicated by city names such Heracleion and Heracleopolis, and he was often associated with Horus, who was

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<sup>34</sup> E.g. Burnett 1991, 26.

sometimes shown with Heracleian attributes, such as a club. What is noteworthy about his appearance in Egyptian numismatics is that, as opposed to many of the other classical deities such as Aphrodite, Apollo, and Hermes who appear on the reverses of Alexandrian coins, Heracles had “historical” connections to Egypt. Not only had he been claimed as an ancestor by the Ptolemies who adopted his club as a dynastic attribute,<sup>35</sup> but according to Greek mythology, the Egyptian king Busiris once captured Heracles as he journeyed through the country, and attempted to kill him as a human sacrifice. On the way to the altar, Heracles broke his bonds and killed the king.<sup>36</sup> The coins of the Labours were minted at a time when Egyptian coins were being very heavily influenced by indigenous motifs, as discussed below. Yet, despite the obvious mythological connection between Heracles and Egypt, no Egyptian coin refers to this subject. The story – technically one of hostile relations between Greeks and Egyptians – could have been seen as too negative to be propagated. Yet, its absence from the numismatic record indicates that the designers of coin reverse types were not concerned primarily with finding ways to incorporate Egyptian themes into their work.

In addition to the examples considered above, the repertoire of the Alexandrian mint comprised many Hellenistic scenes and deities untempered by indigenous influences. These include Nike, Demeter, Athena, Roma, Tyche, and Zeus (e.g. Fig. 4.12, 181 CE; Fig. 4.13, 161-2 CE). These purely classical types, including many like *Homonoia* also produced elsewhere, and others that could have been used to refer to Egypt like Heracles, make it clear that the coinage of Roman Egypt was neither thoroughly hybridised, nor governed by efforts to include local iconography. Nevertheless, classical coin designs form only part of the country’s numismatic record. Beyond these types, the coinage of Roman Egypt is most recognisably characterised by designs that in some way refer to indigenous culture.

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<sup>35</sup> Theocritus 17.20-27; Hölbl 2001, 96.

<sup>36</sup> Pseudo-Apollodorus 2.5.11.

### *Compound Types*

The use of visual elements from indigenous Egyptian culture in Roman coins ranges from “hybrid” or compound images deriving from both classical and indigenous culture, to designs that appear entirely Egyptian in inspiration, with no reference to classical thought beyond the style of rendering. Despite the difference in subject matter, classical, compound, and indigenous types were minted contemporaneously. From this, I argue that, far from demonstrating the decline of indigenous religious culture, compound images are a significant indication of its prominent social status.

### *Serapis and Isis*

One of the most obvious examples of compound imagery is that of coins displaying the images of Serapis and Isis. At the most basic level, such coins can be described as compound simply due to the contemporary cultural identity of these two deities. Although highly Hellenised by the time of the Ptolemies, Isis was fundamentally a traditional indigenous goddess. The first record outside of Egypt of the worship of Isis and her consort Serapis, whose cult expanded with hers, can be seen in an inscription from Halicarnassus dating to the late fourth century BCE.<sup>37</sup> Isis-worship reached Italy in the second century CE,<sup>38</sup> and, despite initially being persecuted by the state,<sup>39</sup> eventually became one of the most widespread and popular religious movements of the era. She was adopted into the Hellenistic pantheon after the conquest of Egypt by Alexander the Great, and was revered by the Ptolemies as a supreme goddess.<sup>40</sup>

The cult of Serapis is an even more striking example of cultural syncretism. Serapis was fabricated from the Egyptian deities Osiris and Apis, incarnated in the form of a classical father-god, and identified with such quintessentially Greek deities as Zeus and Hades. Plutarch (c. 45-120 CE) reported that the cult of Serapis was initially

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<sup>37</sup> Heyob 1975, 6.

<sup>38</sup> Takács 1995, 269.

<sup>39</sup> See Cassius Dio 40.47.3.

<sup>40</sup> Venit 2012, 113.

developed by Ptolemy I in consultation with the Egyptian priest Manetho.<sup>41</sup> He was one of several ancient authors who record this story in various forms.<sup>42</sup> Such a narrative not only underscores the composite nature of Serapis, but also indicates that the Ptolemaic royals consulted the indigenous priesthods on matters of cultural significance.

The syncretic nature of Isis and Serapis on Egyptian coins is demonstrated clearly, being discernible in even their most truncated representations. The limited space provided by the bust image, one of the most popular modes of depiction, did not prevent die-cutters from incorporating the gods' identifying attributes. Serapis is almost always distinguished by the *kalathos* or grain-measure with which he is crowned (Fig. 4.14, 138-139 CE). Isis is usually recognisable by a headdress often referred to as a *basileion*, which is formed of cow horns cradling a sun disk and two tall feathers;<sup>43</sup> the inclusion of a *sistrum* – a percussion instrument consisting of a metal frame and loose rods rattled in the hand that was associated with her worship;<sup>44</sup> or the knot on her breast sometimes interpreted as a *tyet* (Fig. 4.15, 138-139 CE).<sup>45</sup> In the Hellenistic period, the *kalathos* of Serapis, an ancient Greek motif also associated with Demeter originally denoting the domesticity of a wool basket,<sup>46</sup> designated a *modius* or measure of grain, and its image thereby carried connotations of agricultural abundance, fertility, and prosperity. The use of a *kalathos* in Hellenistic representations of Serapis was specifically relevant to his Egyptian character, because the fertility of Egypt, and the ease with which the land yielded its produce, had long been a distinguishing theme in descriptions of the country.<sup>47</sup> The *kalathos* as a symbol of this can be seen in other Egyptian contexts, such as depictions of the goddess Euthenia, and a third century BCE relief of the Apotheosis of Homer, in which Arsinoë III is shown crowned with the *kalathos* (Fig. 4.16). It was an image particularly relevant to the Roman era, during which time Egypt was said to have

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<sup>41</sup> Plutarch *De Iside et Osiride* 362; see Griffiths 1970, 393-95.

<sup>42</sup> Tacitus 4.84; Clement 4.42-43; see Fraser 1972 vol. 1, 246-68; Hölbl 2001, 99-101.

<sup>43</sup> Vassilika 1989, 94; Arslan 1997, 264-71, cat. nos IV.290-IV.304.

<sup>44</sup> Ziegler 1984, 959-63.

<sup>45</sup> Westendorf 1980, 203.

<sup>46</sup> Bundrick 2008, 324.

<sup>47</sup> Herodotus 2.14.

provided Rome annually with 20 million bushels of grain during the reign of Augustus, according to Josephus an amount capable of supporting the city for four months of the year.<sup>48</sup> Serapis also frequently holds the caduceus, traditionally an attribute of Hermes and a clear adoption of classical religious imagery (see Fig. 4.17, 140-141 CE).

While the *kalathos* of Serapis can be interpreted as an allusion to Egypt by means of a Hellenistic motif, the headdress of Isis indicates her indigenous character more strongly. Crowning a corkscrew hairstyle bound with a Macedonian diadem – elements typical of Hellenistic queenly portraits (see Fig. 4.18, 2nd century BCE),<sup>49</sup> the cow horn and sun disk *basileion* headdress was similar to traditional Egyptian images of Isis-Hathor.<sup>50</sup> Similarly, the knot used in Hellenistic depictions of Isis has been considered as derived from the *tyet* of traditional Egyptian iconography, although this interpretation has also been disputed (Fig. 4.19).<sup>51</sup> Nonetheless, it is clear that the Hellenised Isis was identified by indigenous motifs on Roman coins. As noted above, Isis appears on Ptolemaic coins, both seemingly in her own right, and as a Ptolemaic queen in the goddess's guise (see e.g. Fig. 4.4, 169-116 BCE; Fig. 4.5, c. 160-145 BCE).<sup>52</sup> The hairstyle and simple diadem visible in these earlier representations refer to her classical nature, but the headdress represented so prominently, to the extent of appearing alone on smaller denominations as a more concise reference to the goddess (see e.g. Fig. 4.20, 138 CE), is a less diluted representation of her Egyptian origins.

Despite the fundamental syncretism of their cults and the Egyptianising imagery employed in their representations, the anthropomorphic depictions of Serapis and Isis described above still adhere to basic classical conventions in a manner similar to Ptolemaic examples. From such images, it could be interpreted that Roman Alexandria revered these deities as strictly classical gods, with only the most cursory acknowledgment of their indigenous origins. This is disproven by the wider range of Seraptic and Isiac imagery on Roman coins. Far from adhering to the conservative

<sup>48</sup> *Epitome de Caesaribus* 1.6; Josephus 2.16.4; Rickman 1980, 113-18; 231-35.

<sup>49</sup> Stanwick 2002, 35, 37-38, 75-76.

<sup>50</sup> Albersmeier 2002, 54-55.

<sup>51</sup> Westendorf 1980, 203; Bianchi 1980, 9-31; Plantzos 2011, 392.

<sup>52</sup> See Fulinska 2010.

classical ideal of the anthropomorphic divine, by the reign of Antoninus Pius (138-161 CE), Serapis and Isis both appear as snakes.

A coin from the reign of Marcus Aurelius (Fig. 4.21, 153-4 CE) depicts Isis-Thermouthis as a cobra wearing the cow-horn and sun-disk headdress seen on the human-form goddess Isis and holding a sistrum in the curve of her tail. She faces the Agathodaimon, likewise in serpent form, who wears the *pschent* or double crown of Upper and Lower Egypt<sup>53</sup> and holds the caduceus. The Agathodaimon snake with *pschent* and caduceus, and Isis-Thermouthis with sistrum and horned headdress also appear alone in several issues (see e.g. Fig. 4.22, 144-145 CE; Fig. 4.23, 156-157 CE).

The association of snakes with Isis is noted by the Roman author Aelian (c. 175-235 CE), who names Thermouthis, the Egyptian snake goddess, as the sacred asp of Isis.<sup>54</sup> Under Ptolemy IX Soter II (116-81 BCE), a temple to Isis-Thermouthis and Soknopis/Sobek the Egyptian crocodile god was founded at Medinet Madi in the Fayyum on the site of a Middle Kingdom temple dedicated to the Egyptian cobra goddess Renenutet.<sup>55</sup> A Greek hymn inscribed on the pilasters of the temple identifies Isis-Thermouthis as Tyche Agathe, the goddess of good fortune commonly found on Greek and Roman coins throughout the Mediterranean.<sup>56</sup> However, in this temple the goddess is portrayed with the body of a woman and the tail of a snake, linking her clearly with pharaonic images of cobra goddesses instead of the Hellenistic conception of Isis as a classical goddess.

The Medinet Madi inscription also makes clear her association with the deity Agathos Daimon, an Alexandrian god of good fortune and guardian spirit most commonly identified with Isis' consort, Serapis. Also known as the Agathodaimon or the "Good Spirit", this deity is interpreted as embodying the chthonic attributes of Serapis, was linked with the Greek Zeus Ktesios, and had the form of a divine benevolent snake,

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<sup>53</sup> Seeber 1980, 811-16.

<sup>54</sup> Aelian 10.31.

<sup>55</sup> SEG 8.551; Vogliano 1936, 34-39; Dunand 1969, 9, n. 1; Bresciani 1997, 37-41.

<sup>56</sup> Butcher 2012, 472.

an entity also known from Greek tradition.<sup>57</sup> However, far from being a purely Hellenic god, just as Isis-Thermouthis is linked with the Egyptian Renenutet, the Agathodaimon was also widely associated with the ancient Egyptian god Shai.<sup>58</sup> Thus, the appearance of these two deities on Alexandrian coins indicate the influence of Egyptian religion more than Serapis and Isis' appearance in even their most Egyptianising human forms.

What makes these images especially striking is how they contradict certain Roman sensibilities, despite being issued by Roman authorities in Alexandria. That there was in some eras a widespread feeling of aversion to Egypt's animal gods in Roman thought, versus the conception of their own deities as perfectly-formed humanoids, is well-documented in contemporary literature. Juvenal writing in the early second century or late first BCE exclaims, "*Quis nescit...qualia demens Aegyptos portent colat? Crocodilon adoratpars haec, illa pavet saturam serpentibus ibin...*" "Who does not know...what gods the demented Egyptians worship? Here they revere the crocodile, there the ibis that gorges itself with snakes..."<sup>59</sup> In the *Aeneid*, Virgil (70-19 BCE) describes Egypt's gods as *deum monstra*, or monster gods, and Diodorus Siculus (60-30 BCE) writing of Egyptian deities describes them as θαυμάσια καὶ μείζω πίστεως – "strange and beyond belief".<sup>60</sup>

Anti-Egyptian sentiment in Rome reached its peak following the battle of Actium and the defeat of Mark Antony and Cleopatra in 30 BCE; however, such sentiments were not universal and seem to have largely dissipated after the early days of the Roman Empire. By the time of the Antonine emperors, Roman officials in Alexandria were issuing coins that featured such images blatantly. Beyond simply depicting sacred animals with divine attributes, Egyptian coin designs include some of the most unique images found on ancient coins, such as several issues depicting the Agathodaimon and Isis-Thermouthis as snakes with human heads (see e.g. Fig. 4.24, 153-154 CE; Fig. 4.25,

<sup>57</sup> Fraser 1992, 348-50; Tallet and Zivie-Coche 2012, 439.

<sup>58</sup> Dunand 1969, 9-10; Dunand and Zivie-Coche 2004, 244; Frankfurter 2012, 321; Tallet and Zivie-Coche 2012, 439.

<sup>59</sup> Juvenal 15.

<sup>60</sup> Virgil 8.698; Diodorus Siculus 86.1.

175-176 CE). In the case of the former, the figure's beard and *kalathos* headdress clearly evoke the god's identification as Serapis, while the headdress of the latter links the woman's head with the classical Isis. The distinct theriomorphism of such images is even more striking on reverses depicting the anguiform Serapis-Agathodaimon riding a galloping horse (Fig. 4.26, 159-160 CE).<sup>61</sup> This composition has been interpreted as linked conceptually with other Roman coins from the same period depicting the emperor astride,<sup>62</sup> yet these images owe far more to the theriomorphism of the Egyptian religious tradition than to any classical inspiration. By not only depicting gods of acknowledged Egyptian origin, but also endorsing images that stretched far beyond the boundaries of certain Roman sensibilities, Roman officials demonstrated their willingness to engage seriously with Egyptian religious concepts.

#### Nilus and Euthenia

Another sacred couple whose depictions on coin reverses of this period demonstrate multiple cultural influences are Nilus the personification of the Nile River and his consort Euthenia.<sup>63</sup> Although waterways were not normally personified in pharaonic ideology, the Egyptians worshipped the inundation of the river in the guise of the god Hapi, whose androgynous physique of pendulous breasts and belly combined with a male form and beard is understood to denote the feminine fertility of the river embodied in a traditionally masculine entity.<sup>64</sup> The concept of a river god was a familiar one in Greek and Roman mythology, which had no shortage of deified waterways – Achelous and Tiberinus are but two examples.<sup>65</sup> The Greeks and Romans obviously respected the sacred nature of the life-giving river and they continued the practice of revering Nile as a deity.<sup>66</sup> Yet, the concept of worshipping such a feature in a feminine guise was largely alien to classical theology. Female river nymphs existed in classical

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<sup>61</sup> Fraser 1992, 348-50.

<sup>62</sup> Dunand 1969, 31.

<sup>63</sup> Kákosy 1982, 291.

<sup>64</sup> Hornung 1982, 77-79, 276; Baines 1985, 112-15; Dunand and Zivie-Coche 2004, 26.

<sup>65</sup> See Gais 1978, 356, 361.

<sup>66</sup> Tallet and Zivie-Coche 2012, 442.

imagination, but they were most frequently perceived as “daughters” of the male river god who did not require a consort.<sup>67</sup> This was overturned in Hellenistic Egypt where the river was revered instead as a divine couple: a male Nilus, portrayed bearded and muscled, and his consort Euthenia, shown with classical hair and dress.<sup>68</sup>

This dual conceptualisation is reflected in Roman coin designs. While Nilus was often portrayed alone on Roman coins, identified by attributes such as the papyrus plant and cornucopiae (see e.g. Fig. 4.27, 138-139 CE), he was also regularly shown accompanied by his female counterpart. Reverse images depicting Nilus prominently and Euthenia as a small, barely discernible half-figure (see e.g. Fig. 4.28, 159-160 CE) might reflect classical conceptions of a river deity as a dominant male, attended by a subordinate female. However, this interpretation is refuted by other coin images, which depict the overlapping busts of Nilus and Euthenia (identified by lotus buds, ears of wheat, and a cornucopia) (see e.g. Fig. 4.29, 141-142 CE) in a manner comparable to certain conjugate coin images of the Ptolemaic kings and their powerful queens.<sup>69</sup> While the placement of the female face behind the male indicates his ultimate superiority,<sup>70</sup> such images portrayed at the same size and level imply their intrinsically parallel nature.

Bakhoun postulated that the Roman aversion to irregular representations of deities led them to split the traditional conceptualisation of an intersexual Hapi into two divine beings.<sup>71</sup> The willingness of Roman officials to engage with stranger manifestations of Egyptian religion, such as the anguiform Serapis-Agathodaimon and Isis-Thermouthis, indicates that such a concern was not always predominant in the composition of such images. Yet, the link between the concept of a divine river-couple and the Egyptian notion of the river as a bi-gendered entity, both far distant from the classical male river deity, suggests that representations of Nilus and Euthenia in Roman Egypt derive from a classicising interpretation of the male-female Hapi. This points once

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<sup>67</sup> Rigoglioso 2011, 87.

<sup>68</sup> Bakhoun 1999, 93.

<sup>69</sup> Hazzard 2000, 92-93; Von Reden 2007, 50.

<sup>70</sup> Hazzard 2000, 93.

<sup>71</sup> Bakhoun 1999, 93.

more to the Romans' engagement with the intricacies of indigenous Egyptian religious beliefs.

### Harpocrates/Horus

If the examples discussed above suggest that Roman coinage in Egypt was influenced strongly by indigenous traditions, the complexity of certain other motifs are even more compelling. One of these, the deity Harpocrates, is a Hellenistic incarnation of Hor-pa-khered, the youthful form of the Egyptian god Horus, son of Isis and Osiris. Portrayed as a child, Harpocrates is depicted in a wide range of composite forms, almost all of which are partly informed by traditional representations of the Egyptian god.<sup>72</sup> In his most Hellenistic manifestations, Harpocrates is shown as a classical nude standing contrapposto, flanked by columns and cornucopiae (see e.g. Fig. 4.30, 138-139 CE). He is identified by the stylised *pschent* – double crown of Upper and Lower Egypt – that he wears, and by the pose in which he holds his finger to his mouth. Implying youth, this gesture derived from his identification as a child-god, referencing Hor-pa-khered's identity as the child of two of Egypt's preeminent deities, as well as Harpocrates' identification in the Hellenistic period with the child-god Eros. Other coins more clearly demonstrate the essential syncretism of Harpocrates' nature. One of the most striking of these depicts the god as a small child, in his characteristic finger-to-mouth pose, but crouching on a large lotus flower (see e.g. Fig. 4.31, 143-144 CE). This image is a deeply significant religious motif, memorably exemplified in the wooden bust from the tomb of Tutankhamun portraying the head of the boy-king emerging from a lotus blossom (Fig. 4.32, c. 1323 BCE). The traditional image of Hor-pa-khered rising out of a lotus blossom links the god with the rising sun, which emerged in such a way out of the primeval waters at the moment of creation, and with the annual Nile inundation.<sup>73</sup> This image is therefore strongly associated with indigenous concepts of rebirth, while the double crown that Harpocrates usually wears makes reference to the sacred order guarded by the

<sup>72</sup> Dunand and Zivie-Coche 2004, 274; Rondot 2013, 246-53.

<sup>73</sup> Schlögl 1977, 26-28; Meeks 2010, 5.

traditional rulers of Egypt. Thus, the use of indigenous religious imagery in representations of Harpocrates is another indication of awareness and acceptance of religious culture on the part of the coin designers.

### Hermanubis

Of the culturally compound coins of Roman Egypt, a final group deserving consideration is that portraying the god Hermanubis. The most immediately arresting aspect of this deity is his name, which is a combination of the Greek messenger god Hermes and the Egyptian god of mummification Anubis. The correlation between these two gods was a natural one, as Hermes and Anubis were believed to convey the deceased to the Underworld in Hellenic and indigenous thought, respectively. Thus, Hermanubis' mere appearance on the coins of this period is an undeniable indication of the Helleno-Egyptian cultural syncretism reflected frequently in coin designs. A typical example of his representations on Egyptian coins is a reverse showing him clean shaven and with undraped shoulders, crowned with a laurel wreath and lotus, and facing a caduceus combined with a palm branch (Fig. 4.33, 146-147 CE). The caduceus is a classical reference to Hermes; however, in the second half of the second century CE Apuleius writes of a devotee of Anubis in Corinth wearing a jackal-head mask and carrying a caduceus.<sup>74</sup> The description indicates that the god's assimilation was so successful that the symbol came to represent Hermanubis even in his most Egyptian form. The laurel wreath that Hermanubis wears is a quintessentially Greek ornament, but the lotus is a deliberate reference to the god's Egyptian origins. Still more significant is a coin type portraying the god standing. Hermanubis is depicted much as before, bare-faced, bearing a caduceus and palm branch, but this time he is shown accompanied by a jackal, which sits at his feet (Fig. 4.34, 158-159 CE).

No Alexandrian coin depicts the traditional Egyptian form of Anubis as a jackal-headed man. However, the inclusion of the jackal in the scene leaves no doubt as to the identification of the god. These types thus make it clear that the Roman designers not

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<sup>74</sup> See Apuleius 11.11.

only recognised and but also openly acknowledged his association with traditional Egyptian religion.

Compound coins not only seem to display an awareness of and possible respect for indigenous religious ideas, but also show a willingness to regard these as coeval with classical theology. That the administration combined indigenous and classical religious imagery publicly while simultaneously depicting both of these in undiluted forms shows the same respect for the former as for the latter.

### *Indigenous Types*

It is in a third category of coin types that the full use of traditional Egyptian religion on the iconography of Roman coins is made clear. These are the coins in which no classical motifs are discernible, and whose reverse designs appear to have been informed wholly by indigenous attributes and traditions, despite a classical style of rendering.

### Egyptian Animals

The first group into which these coins can be divided are those depicting animals with specific Egyptian associations. Two such examples are seen in two coins depicting a crocodile and a hippopotamus, respectively (Fig. 4.35, 146-147 CE; Fig. 4.36, 18-19 CE). Shown alone and rendered naturalistically, there is little doubt that the inclusion of these images on the coin reverses was intended as a direct reference to Egypt. Due to the African habitat of these animals and the geography of the Hellenistic world, Greek and Roman experience of these creatures could only have come about by way of Egypt, and the country and the animals must have been inextricably linked in classical thought. Roman and Hellenistic wall paintings and mosaics seem to have included such animals as iconographic references to Egypt. This can be seen clearly in the deliberately Nilotic Palestrina mosaic, as well as in the more varied paintings at Marisa, where it has been

suggested that the Egyptian animals may have been included in the painting because Marisa was under Ptolemaic rule at that time.<sup>75</sup>

It seems clear that viewers of these coin reverses would have automatically understood the Egyptian connotations of the figures, which in these examples are shown undiluted by classical imagery, as opposed to the examples mentioned above. This can be seen in coins issued by Augustus at Rome for circulation outside of Egypt around the time of his conquest of Cleopatra in 30 BCE, which depict a crocodile accompanied by the words *Aegypto Capta* – “upon the conquest of Egypt”.<sup>76</sup> Yet, these motifs were not necessarily always a mere zoological rebus for the country of Egypt. The crocodile and the hippopotamus were deeply rooted in Egyptian mythology, being associated respectively with the god Sobek, and the goddess of childbirth Taweret, both dangerous and protective deities whose fierce nature was embodied in their animal manifestations.<sup>77</sup> Depictions of these animals thus have direct potential links with indigenous religious culture.

This is suggested more strongly in the depiction of another commonly portrayed animal, the ichneumon or Egyptian mongoose.<sup>78</sup> This motif introduces a new level of complexity to the question of Egyptian animal iconography. If religious symbolism played no part in the choice of coin design, the prominence of the crocodile and the hippopotamus could be understood as due to the impressive nature of the animals alone. Large, dangerous, and in appearance unlike any animal native to Greece and Rome, it is easy to comprehend why these creatures captured Hellenistic imaginations. It is much more difficult to understand how the mongoose, referred to by an early English traveler as the “Rat of Nilus”,<sup>79</sup> would have done the same. Certainly not present in the numismatic record by virtue of its impressive appearance, the mongoose must have been

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<sup>75</sup> Meyboom 1995, 32 n. 114; Jacobson 2005, 32-33, 48.

<sup>76</sup> Walker and Higgs 2001, 259, nos. 295-96; cf. the chained crocodile on the coinage of Augustus minted at Nemausus, Walker and Higgs 2001, 260, nos. 305-6.

<sup>77</sup> Robins 1993, 63 fig. 19; Arnold 1995, 32 no. 33; 33 no. 34.

<sup>78</sup> See Emmett 2001, no. 1316.

<sup>79</sup> Cooney 1965, 103.

included for its symbolic implications. Sacred to the gods Horus, Atum, and Buto,<sup>80</sup> the mongoose was renowned for killing snakes and eating crocodile eggs, a trait commemorated in Egyptian mythology when the demon Apophis in the form of a crocodile or snake is defeated by Re-Horakhty in the guise of a mongoose.<sup>81</sup> The mythology surrounding the figure of a mongoose shows the complexity of indigenous thought that could inform the simplest coin reverses. While the coin designers may not have always understood the full implications of the motifs that they chose, Herodotus' reference to the ritual burials of mongooses indicates that the Greeks and Romans would have been aware of the mongoose's religious significance in Egypt as early as the fifth century BCE.<sup>82</sup>

It is of course possible that that animal imagery on coins was not necessarily always imbued with religious or other serious cultural import. Egyptian animals were a popular addition to natural history-themed mosaics throughout the Roman world,<sup>83</sup> and the depiction of indigenous fauna would have functioned well on coins as a representative symbol for the country. The use of animal iconography in the absence of religious import may be demonstrated by the appearance of a rhinoceros depicted similarly on a coin of Domitian (Fig. 4.37, 91-92 CE). This animal, although an African mammal that must have been introduced to the Hellenistic world through Egypt, had no background in either traditional Egyptian or classical mythology.<sup>84</sup> However, the rhinoceros had appeared on the coinage of Domitian minted in Rome less than ten years earlier, in a famous issue from the years 83-85 CE commemorating the importation of one of these animals to Rome where it was a hugely popular addition to the annual games.<sup>85</sup> The appearance of the rhinoceros on Egyptian coins was probably likewise commemorative of this spectacle, and/or imitating the Roman type.

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<sup>80</sup> Cooney 1965, 101; Dunand and Zivie-Coche 2004, 16.

<sup>81</sup> See Wilson 1997; Meyboom 1995, 27, n.74.

<sup>82</sup> Herodotus 2.67.

<sup>83</sup> See Meyboom 1995, 32, n. 114; Jacobson 2005, 32-33.

<sup>84</sup> Dunand and Zivie-Coche 2004, 17.

<sup>85</sup> Buttrey 2007, 109-10; Carradice and Buttrey 2007, 247.

However, the use of the non-sacred rhinoceros in Egyptian coins does not necessarily diminish the religious import of other animal imagery. That attribute-less depictions of certain animals may have been understood as references to traditional Egyptian religion is indicated by how their representations varied with the denomination of the coins on which they appear. For example, a 12 mm coin produced during the reign of Antoninus Pius (Fig. 4.38, 138-161 CE) depicts a solitary ibis on its reverse, while a 34 mm coin (Fig. 4.39, 140-141 CE) – three times as large as the former – from the same period shows the bird positioned at the feet of the deity Hermes, the Greek incarnation of the ibis-headed Thoth. This pattern of an animal depicted alone on small denominations and in the company of an associated deity on larger coins is largely consistent throughout the numismatic record, suggesting that the solitary appearance of animals on smaller coins was dictated by limits of design space (see e.g. Fig. 4.40, 144-145 CE; Fig. 4.41, 144-145 CE). Viewers of these images would likely have understood simple depictions of Egyptian animals as concise symbolic references to more complex religious ideas, which were thereby directly linked to traditional indigenous mythology.

Other coins use animal imagery to reference indigenous religion openly, such as those depicting the anguiform Isis-Thermouthis and Serapis-Agathodaimon (see e.g. Fig. 4.21, 153-154 CE). Animals could also be depicted not merely as an attribute of a humanoid deity or as incarnations of otherwise anthropomorphic gods such as Isis-Thermouthis but as religious figures in themselves. An important example of this is the representation of the Apis bull (see e.g. Fig. 4.42, 138-161 CE; Fig. 4.43, 144-145 CE). Portrayed in a similar fashion to the animals considered previously, Apis stands alone before an altar, distinguished by a sun-disk between his horns, and a crescent on the side of his body.<sup>86</sup> The horned altar before him is a form found in Late Period religious complexes, such as that found in the forecourt of the tomb of Petosiris, an Egyptian priest who lived in the second half of the fourth century BCE (see Fig. 4.44, c. 300 BCE).<sup>87</sup> Unlike the other animals in this discussion, Apis was not the attribute of a traditional god

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<sup>86</sup> See Dunand and Zivie-Coche 2004, 21.

<sup>87</sup> See Quaegebeur, 1971, 195; Soukiassian, 1983.

adopted and re-imagined by the Greeks, but was revered as an Egyptian god in his own right. In this capacity he appears to have been largely resistant to classical influences. His accompaniment by an indigenous altar – a standard way of depicting him – further emphasises his indigenous character. The Romans willingly referenced other theriomorphic deities such as the ibis-headed Thoth and jackal-headed Anubis on their coins, but had taken the step of splitting their humanoid and animal qualities, thus producing a classically acceptable image of the divine in human form. In contrast to these deities, and similar to depictions of Isis-Thermouthis and Serapis-Agathodaimon, indigenous theology conceived of Apis as a divine animal devoid of anthropomorphic embodiment, almost without exception.<sup>88</sup> Regarding administrative attitudes to indigenous religion, that the Romans were happy to accept a fully indigenous deity on their coinage in unaltered form is a striking indication of high regard.

#### Osiris-Canopus Jars

I have argued that a Roman aversion to theriomorphic images may have led Alexandrian coin designers to modify traditional Egyptian motifs in keeping with an aversion to unusual images, from splitting the intersexual Hapi into the partner gods Nilus and Euthenia, to re-identifying animals that were traditionally a physical element of Egyptian gods as accompanying familiars. Thus, as with the appearance of the anguiform Serapis-Agathodaimon, it is striking that the coins of Roman Egypt depicted one of the more fantastic forms in Alexandrian iconography: the human-headed Osiris-Canopus jar. Similar in form to the pharaonic canopic jars attested from the Ninth Dynasty (c. 2160-2025 BCE), the Osiris-Canopus jar, like the Agatho-Daimon, appears to have been a post-pharaonic development in Egypt and examples are largely attested in Graeco-Roman contexts throughout the Roman period.<sup>89</sup> Associated with the cult of Osiris at Canopus, to the east of Alexandria, the jars seem to have functioned as cult images for use in rituals

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<sup>88</sup> Dunand and Zivie-Coche 2004, 20.

<sup>89</sup> Brovarski 1978, 1-5; Martin 1980, 316-19; Bianchi 1988, 248-49, cat. no. 136.

or carried in sacred processions.<sup>90</sup> It is clear that these jars were not a part of traditional religious culture in Egypt; however, the imagery used in their depiction was almost entirely derived from traditional indigenous motifs. In one of the most common types found on coins, a rounded jar is shown resting on a wreath and surmounted by a human head wearing a *khat* headdress and a composite *atef* crown incorporating ram horns, plumes, a sun disk, and uraei (see e.g. Fig. 4.45, 138-139 CE). These attributes come directly from the indigenous canon; however, the combination of this crown with the image of the Osiris-Canopus jar is not an arrangement found in traditional imagery, and the overall effect is very far removed from traditional figures.

This type thus illustrates a development in religious thought and interpretations of traditional imagery. The images portrayed are not direct copies of traditional Egyptian iconography; however, they are significant for being composed wholly of what was originally indigenous imagery while the images themselves blatantly reference a cult that was inextricably tied to Egypt. Like the images of Serapis-Agathodaimon and Isis-Thermouthis therefore, these coins show that the Roman administration was willing to promote religious images that reflected the country and society wherein the coins would circulate regardless of their distance from classical norms.

### A Sacred Barque

A weighty reference to traditional Egyptian religious culture is seen on a coin from the reign of Antoninus Pius depicting a wheeled boat (Fig. 4.46, CE 175-176). Shaped distinctively in a graceful curve from prow to stern and bearing a figure in an open kiosk in its centre, the boat is clearly meant to be an Egyptian sacred barque, a prominent motif in traditional indigenous religion.<sup>91</sup> One of its most important manifestations was the solar barque in which the sun god Ra traversed the sky during the daytime and sailed back through the underworld during the night.<sup>92</sup> Sacred barques also played a significant public role in Egyptian religion. Statues of the gods were

<sup>90</sup> Plutarch *De Iside et Osiride* 36; Kettel 1994, 326-30; Dunand 1998, 191; Bakhoun 1999, 121-24.

<sup>91</sup> Kitchen 1975, 619-26.

<sup>92</sup> Kitchen 1975, 619; Lesko 1991, 98-99, 118-19.

traditionally kept in the inner rooms of the temple where they were cared for by the priests away from the eyes of the populace. On specific festival days, however, the priests carried the statues from the temple in small barques and paraded them before the people in an open procession as seen, for example, in a temple wall relief at Philae (Fig. 4.50).<sup>93</sup> The wheels visible beneath the barque on the coin reverse are a deviation from the traditional form of the festival barque, which the priests carried on their shoulders with poles; yet, by indicating movement over land rather than water they clearly refer to the barque's sacred role as opposed to the practical use of a boat. Along with the wheels, the figure inside the central kiosk indicates that the vehicle depicted here was meant for the traditional purpose of transporting statues of the gods. These elements suggest that the sacred processions wherein priests escorted statues of the gods before the people continued into Roman times, and the coins may even refer to specific religious festivals in which the sacred barques were brought out according to tradition, using a nontraditional means of locomotion. The image of an indigenous barque on this Roman coin thus not only demonstrates administrative attention to traditional religious practice, but also highlights the public nature of this attitude by depicting the continued practice of an ancient Egyptian ritual involving indigenous priests that was observable by the wider population.

### Indigenous Architecture

While the examples mentioned above all show the influence of purely Egyptian sensibilities unqualified by classical motifs, coins depicting indigenous religious architecture demonstrate this point unmistakably. The depiction of religious architecture on Roman coin reverses was a common practice throughout the Empire, and Alexandrian coins commonly depict classical temple fronts, such as a depiction of the temple of Tyche in which a stylobate, straight Corinthian columns, and triangular pediment are clearly discernible (Fig. 4.48, 138-161 CE).<sup>94</sup> Certain coins depict architecture of a

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<sup>93</sup> Silverman 1991, 52-53; Baines 1991, 148; Karlshausen 1998, 859-73.

<sup>94</sup> See Handler 1971, 57-74.

Graeco-Egyptian nature, such as an example portraying two Osiris-Canopus jars enclosed by a frame that includes Egyptian-style columns and a segmental pediment (Fig. 4.49, 165-166 CE).<sup>95</sup> While the image might reference a portable, temple-shaped shrine or kiosk as opposed to an actual structure, the Egyptian derivation of the architectural elements, such as the bulbous columns and lotus capitals, is obvious. However, the arrangement of these traditional components directly mimics the composition of the purely classical architectural types represented by the Tyche temple coin mentioned above, and the resulting effect is one of heavily diluted tradition.

By contrast, coin reverses depicting the architectural form of pylons are almost completely devoid of Hellenistic influences. As the monumental gateways of Egyptian temples, pylons were the title page of sacred indigenous complexes, and the image of a pylon façade on a coin functions as a concise depiction of an indigenous temple.<sup>96</sup> In one example from the reign of Marcus Aurelius (Fig. 4.50, 165-166 CE), an eagle is displayed prominently atop the pylon in between the two towers, which hold an Osiris-Canopus image within.<sup>97</sup> Two Osiris-Canopus jars are depicted in same position as the eagle on a second coin from the reign of Lucius Verus (Fig. 4.51, 165-166 CE). Like the Osiris-Canopus shrine coin referenced above, which combines Greek and Egyptian building modes (Fig. 4.49, 165-166 CE), the arrangement of these pylon coins differs from traditional compositional convention. The placement of the Osiris-Canopus jars between the pylon towers on the Lucius Verus coin has no precedent in indigenous art; yet, this image can also be seen in Alexandrian bone gaming-counters with the name *Kanopos* on the reverse, which appears to link the image with the temple of Osiris in the town of Canopus.<sup>98</sup> Similarly, although the naturalistic eagle on the Marcus Aurelius coin is also a blatantly classical motif, it has been suggested that its inclusion here refers to

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<sup>95</sup> McKenzie 2007, 185-87.

<sup>96</sup> See Naster 1968, 181-82, pls 1-2.

<sup>97</sup> See Naster 1968, 183-86.

<sup>98</sup> Alföldi-Rosenbaum 1976, 218-19; Meyboom 1995, 54-55, n. 78; McKenzie, 2007, 186, fig. 314.

Zeus' association with Amun, thereby linking this temple image with the temple of Amun at Luxor.<sup>99</sup>

Visually, the pylons are almost identical to surviving examples from indigenous temples. The coin of Marcus Aurelius in particular demonstrates a remarkable likeness to both the Ptolemaic temple of Horus at Edfu and the pharaonic mortuary temple of Rameses III at Medinet Habu (Figs 4.52, 4.53). On the coin, long rectangles on the face of each pylon tower have been described as doors.<sup>100</sup> However, comparison with the pylons of these two temples shows that these rectangles are meant instead to indicate flag-pole grooves, as seen in the physical structures. The two square windows shown near the top of the coin pylons are similarly comparable to windows in the pylon façades. Of all the examples of coin reverse types examined thus far, including classical and indigenous motifs and combinations thereof, the pylon coins portray a traditional Egyptian motif with the most extensive cultural implications. Instead of depicting a deity that could have been worshipped in a familiarly classical context, despite having an unaltered indigenous form, the pylon coins refer to environments that continued to function as bastions of indigenous religious culture under the Egyptian priesthods. As a scene primarily intended for non-Egyptian eyes, the early Roman depiction of an Egyptian pylon in the Palestrina mosaic may have had different connotations, even if it was meant to represent a specific temple in Egypt, as has been argued.<sup>101</sup> On the other hand, by the time the pylon coins were struck, the structure may have become something of a stock type representing a traditional temple pylon as opposed to a depiction of a specific building. Nonetheless, within Egypt's borders, the pylon coins must have been seen as a direct and unflinching reference to Egyptian religious culture.

### *Nome Types*

The influence of indigenous religion on coin reverse designs in Roman Egypt is probably demonstrated most clearly by a final group of coin types known as the nome

<sup>99</sup> See Meyboom 1995, 53-55, ns 76-77.

<sup>100</sup> Roman Provincial Coinage Online description.

<sup>101</sup> Meyboom 1995, 53-55; Istvánfi 2004, 77.

issues. Issued between 91-92 and 144-145 CE, from the reign of Domitian to that of Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius,<sup>102</sup> this group is similar to the category of compound types discussed previously, but its distinctly local nature begs consideration alongside primarily indigenous types. The reverse designs of these coins refer to the local cults of different Egyptian nomes or administrative districts,<sup>103</sup> and many coins are clearly marked with the name of the nome that they represent. In indigenous tradition, nomes were commonly identified according to their cults and primary deities; in the Ptolemaic and Roman periods this was reflected in processional reliefs depicting nome deities, which often adorned the lowest registers of traditional temple walls, as seen in the temple of Amun at Naukratis.<sup>104</sup> The level of detail informing references to Egyptian nomes on Alexandrian coins is one of the most striking indications of administrative engagement with local religious culture found in coin iconography. This shows clearly the high social status enjoyed by indigenous religious culture throughout the Roman period.

It is unclear how many nomes were recognised in the Roman period. The records of Strabo and Pliny the Elder from the first centuries BCE and CE provide a range from thirty-six to forty-three, and both authors acknowledge a margin of error in the naming and numbering of the districts.<sup>105</sup> While not all of these are represented in surviving coins, a considerable number of nomes and occasionally their capital cities can be identified, including Upper Sebennytes, Sethroites, Oxyrhynchites, Saites, Heracleopolites, Hermopolites, Memphites, Mendesium, Menelaites, Arsinoites, and Naukratis.<sup>106</sup> The names of these nomes are in most cases either general references to the character of their local cult or Greek adaptations of their ancient Egyptian names. An example of the first approach can be seen in the renamed Leontopolite nome, whose Greek nomenclature means “City of Lions” after the cults of the feline goddesses

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<sup>102</sup> Emmett 2001, xv.

<sup>103</sup> See O’Connor 1972, 686-90.

<sup>104</sup> See Von Recklinghausen 2014, 2-4, fig. 1.

<sup>105</sup> Strabo 17.3; Pliny the Elder 5.9.

<sup>106</sup> Emmett 2001, xv.

Sekhmet and Bastet and the lion-god Mahes that dominated its capital city (known as Taremu in Egyptian).<sup>107</sup> In the second approach to Hellenic nome-naming, administrators noted the indigenous patron deity of each district, identified the most appropriate parallel god from the classical pantheon, and restyled the nome by the name of the latter.

The renaming of the Hermopolite nome is an example of such a transcription, as demonstrated by a standard sample of the nome coin type (Fig. 4.54, 144-145 CE). The nome's capital city, ancient Khmun, had been traditionally associated with Thoth and contained the chief temple of this god, whom the Greeks identified with their own Hermes.<sup>108</sup> Khmun was accordingly given the Greek name Hermopolis Magna, or “great city of Hermes”, and a classical temple to Hermes was built directly adjacent to the old Egyptian-style temple of Thoth, giving a dualistic character to this centre of worship and indicating the new syncretic conception of the god.<sup>109</sup> The Hermopolite coin depicts a classically bearded man dressed in a Greek mantle, holding in his left hand a caduceus and in his right hand an ibis while a baboon crouches at his feet. The figure is identified as Thoth-Hermes,<sup>110</sup> and it is in such images that the complexity of Hellenic-Egyptian religious dualism is clearly shown. The Hellenistic portrayal of the figure coupled with the inclusion of the caduceus indicates that the deity is meant to be Hermes, while the ibis and baboon, both ancient attributes of Thoth,<sup>111</sup> reflect his simultaneous identification with the Egyptian deity.

As befitting images referencing translated regional concepts, nome coins are primarily syncretic in style. They are typically labelled with the Greek name of a particular nome and depict a deity, normally standing and distinguished by several distinctive attributes. This deity is almost always the patron god referenced by the Greek name of the nome, as seen in the Hermopolite coin described above. There are, however, certain significant exceptions.

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<sup>107</sup> See Weber and Geissen 2013, 300-05.

<sup>108</sup> Myśliwiec 2000, 168 n. 3.

<sup>109</sup> Bailey 1990, 124; McKenzie 2007, 120, 158-60.

<sup>110</sup> Geissen 2005, 169.

<sup>111</sup> Dunand and Zivi-Coche 2004, 15, 20.

The complicated imagery of the Hermopolite coin is straightforward in comparison with certain other nome types. Of particular note is a bronze drachma from Thebes (Luxor), a city connected to the indigenous god Amun-Ra (Fig. 4.55, 144-145 CE). In his roles as a solar deity and cardinal deity of the Egyptian pantheon, Amun-Ra was associated in Hellenistic theology with Helios and Zeus.<sup>112</sup> According to the logic of the iconography on the Hermopolite coin, the Theban drachma should portray one of these two Greek deities accompanied by Hellenised attributes of the original Egyptian deity. Instead, this coin depicts a man astride a horse, holding a serpent and wearing a cuirass and radiate crown. The crown is a reference to Helios, yet neither Helios nor Zeus is an equestrian god in classical thought. While Helios was frequently depicted riding in a sun chariot, it is doubtful that this mounted figure is a compositional compression of that image. The twin gods Castor and Pollux are occasionally depicted armoured and astride in classical art,<sup>113</sup> but this image is unaccompanied by a brother-god. The figure is instead interpreted as the Thracian rider god Heron.<sup>114</sup> While this name is inconsistent with Thebes' primary cultic associations, a more detailed examination of the situation reveals the logic behind this image.

Thebes was the location of an army garrison in Ptolemaic and Roman times – to the extent that the enclosure of the pharaonic temple of Luxor was converted into a military camp at the beginning of the fourth century CE. The god Heron was frequently associated with soldier populations,<sup>115</sup> as reflected by the military uniform that he wears in this image.<sup>116</sup> Furthermore, the increase in the ratio of cavalry to infantry recorded in Egypt after the first century CE means that the Theban garrison would have likely included a considerable number of mounted troops.<sup>117</sup> This fact reinforces the local applicability of the mounted warrior god. The Heron nome coin demonstrates that the designers of nome coins did not always simply seize upon the most obvious associations

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<sup>112</sup> Tallet and Zivie-Coche 2012, 449.

<sup>113</sup> Kantorowicz 1961, 368.

<sup>114</sup> Roman Provincial Coinage Online description; Geissen 2005, 169-70.

<sup>115</sup> Dunand and Zivie-Coche 2004, 246; Tallet and Zivie-Coche 2012, 439, 444-46.

<sup>116</sup> Rondot 2013, 290-91.

<sup>117</sup> Alston 1995, 147.

of a region, but could pay attention to the nuances of a specific location's religious character.

If the coin references the beliefs of the local garrison, the designers could have been prioritising the city's Hellenised population, of which the soldiers must be considered a part if only because of their immersion in the Roman army.<sup>118</sup> However, the image also demonstrates a subtle understanding of local indigenous beliefs. Heron was equated by the Greeks with the Egyptian god Atum,<sup>119</sup> who in his turn was frequently merged in Egyptian theology with Ra and portrayed as a serpent. Thus, I argue that the serpent held by the rider god refers to Heron's identification with Atum, who in his turn is associated with Ra, who is himself linked with the city of Thebes and is additionally acknowledged by Heron's solar crown. This coin, therefore, not only depicts a classical translation of a traditional Egyptian cult, but also demonstrates a meticulous engagement with the complexity of indigenous theology.

### *Implications of the Evidence*

Examination of the different motifs of Egyptian coins reveals that indigenous religious concepts both strongly inform and entirely replace classical motifs with striking frequency. This is extremely significant for the question at hand. I argue that the inclusion of Egyptian religious imagery in Roman coin design demonstrates a productive relationship between the administration and indigenous religious culture during the Roman period, and indicates the continued prominent status of the latter. Before this can be concluded, however, specific questions of logistics must be addressed. Who was in charge of coin production? Who chose the images to appear on coin reverses and decided on final types, and who informed the design process? What does the chronological record of these types indicate and what was the purpose of including these motifs? The answers to these questions reveal the full significance of indigenous religious iconography on Alexandrian coins.

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<sup>118</sup> See Haensch 2012, 72-74.

<sup>119</sup> Alston 1995, 138; Myśliwiec 1977, 89-97.

### *Agents of Production*

#### Government Initiative

As noted previously, one of the most fundamental elements of numismatic evidence is the involvement of the central government in the production of the coins. In order to function successfully as a valid form of currency, coinage must be endorsed by the administration of the region within which it circulates. The government of money-based societies is charged at some level with maintaining standards of weight and value, limiting the activity of forgers, and supplying the market with the necessary quantities of cash. These responsibilities place the minting of coins directly under the authority of the government, and governments have long exploited this arrangement by tailoring the imagery on the coins to suit their own agendas. The relevance of describing Roman coin imagery as *propaganda* has been a subject of some debate,<sup>120</sup> with *publicity* proposed as a more correct description.<sup>121</sup> Regardless of the terminology, it is clear that coin iconography was used to disseminate ideas and information, and was a powerful form of ideological communication.

For example, a common use of Roman coin reverses was the commemoration of significant state events, such as military victories. One example from outside Egypt, a Roman denarius struck in 70/1 CE and depicting a bound figure flanked by the words *Judaea Devicta* or “Judaea Vanquished” clearly celebrates the victory of Vespasian over the Jews (Fig. 4.56, 70/1 CE). This use of coins is also attested in Roman Egypt, as seen in several examples commemorating victories over the Britons in the reigns of Commodus and Septimius Severus respectively, indicated by the image of a trophy and the word *Brettani*, or by the straightforward inscription *Neike kata Bret* or “Victory over the Britons”.<sup>122</sup> In such cases, the event memorialised by the coins was so distant from Egypt that it is hard to imagine an Egyptian of any ethnicity being personally affected by

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<sup>120</sup> Jones 1974, 62.

<sup>121</sup> Levick 1982, 104-07.

<sup>122</sup> Burnett 1991, 29-31.

these victories. This shows that Egyptian coin iconography during the Roman period was a governmental domain and at least partially directed by imperial interests.

### Artisans

Although the state provenance of Egyptian coinage is plain, it is necessary to consider who all was responsible for the design of the coins. Here a distinction must be made between the role of the artisan and that of the designer. While conceptual agency and physical agency are not the same, the artisans who physically fashioned the coin dies are in some way accountable for the appearance of the resulting images. The fact that the images on Egyptian coins are rendered in classical style as opposed to that of traditional Egyptian art suggests that Alexandrian coin reverse designs were physically fashioned by people trained outside of the indigenous tradition, regardless of the ethnic identity of these craftsmen. The consistent classical style of rendering and the location of the mint in Alexandria imply a more or less homogenous group of Hellenised Alexandrian artisans. However, the cultural complexity of the motifs that appear on the coin reverses indicates that a more varied group of persons was involved in the primary design process.

### Designers

Since Alexandrian coinage was a government department, the ultimate choice of imagery was probably approved by the official in charge of the mint, likely the magistrate known the *Idios Logos*, a Roman bureaucrat who would have been expected to represent imperial interests.<sup>123</sup> Milne surmised that such mint officials operated largely on their own initiative without higher direction, either using stock types, or composing original, contemporarily relevant designs when they had the time, drawing from concepts “characteristic of the executive class in the civil service of Alexandria.”<sup>124</sup> Yet, in the light of the coin types examined here, it is clearly inaccurate to trace all design initiative and influence solely to a middle group of Roman bureaucrats in Alexandria.

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<sup>123</sup> Milne 1971, 18, 40.

<sup>124</sup> Milne 1971, 40.

Firstly, many of the purely classical types of coin reverses demonstrate a close link with higher levels of government outside of Egypt. Hadrian's provincial tour series and the two Egyptian series depicting the Zodiac and Labours of Heracles were all produced within a span of fifteen years, suggesting that imperial initiative at times influenced the design of Egyptian coins.<sup>125</sup>

Secondly, the appearance of strongly indigenous, complex imagery indicates that persons outside of an insular class of Roman officials must have been involved in its design. Compound imagery on the coin reverses might have been created by persons with only a cursory visual familiarity with Egyptian culture. This explanation could be supported by the existence of compound architecture of Alexandria,<sup>126</sup> since individuals designing the coin reverses might have simply reproduced images they had seen in the city where they resided. Alexandrian statues of Osiris-Canopus jars and of deities such as Hermanubis and Harpocrates, like those unearthed in the suburb of Ras el-Soda (see Fig. 4.57),<sup>127</sup> appear very similar to their depictions on the coins. However, it is less clear whether this explanation can account for the appearance of purely Egyptian motifs such as the depiction of pylon façades.

Both Handler and McKenzie suggest that the pylon coins portray the temple of Isis in Alexandria, which may have been originally constructed in this highly traditional form.<sup>128</sup> Handler draws this conclusion in tandem with her observation that structures depicted on Alexandrian coins should be "in almost all cases" understood as Alexandrian buildings.<sup>129</sup> This is challenged by an Alexandrian coin that copies a Roman type depicting the arch of Nero at Rome.<sup>130</sup> While it is impossible to state definitively that the pylon coin was not meant as a depiction of an Alexandrian temple, no archaeological evidence for such a building from the ancient Alexandrian cityscape has survived to the present day. The scanty public architectural remains from the city are largely classical in

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<sup>125</sup> E.g. Bakhoum 1999; Norena 2001.

<sup>126</sup> See McKenzie 2007, 115-18, 185-88.

<sup>127</sup> McKenzie 2007, 187.

<sup>128</sup> McKenzie 2007, 185-87. Handler 1971, 61.

<sup>129</sup> Handler 1971, 58.

<sup>130</sup> Price and Trell 1977, 33.

character and only occasionally influenced by a traditional Egyptian aesthetic. It is consequently impossible to conclude that this strikingly traditional image was drawn from an Alexandrian model.

Of course, if the city of Alexandria did not comprise such buildings in substance, it almost certainly contained their images. The Library of Alexandria was a repository of information almost without equal in the Hellenistic and Roman world, and the zeal of its curators for gathering new texts is attested by such stories as Galen's account (c. 129-200 CE) of the confiscation of new books from all ships that harboured in Alexandria.<sup>131</sup> Thus, the knowledge necessary to compose the coin reverses discussed above could have been acquired from the library's extensive resources.

Purely Egyptian motifs such as the pylon could also have been copied from contexts outside of Alexandria by a Roman official traveling through Egypt. The topography of the country, which locates nearly every major centre of Egyptian civilisation along the Nile, encouraged internal mobility, and entailed easy access to most cultural sites. The Roman emperors Hadrian (117-138 CE) and Septimius Severus (193-211 CE) themselves are known to have travelled up the Nile and viewed the sights.<sup>132</sup> Pylon-form temples did exist in the Delta not far from Alexandria, for example at Canopus and Taposiris Magna;<sup>133</sup> and Roman officials designing coin reverses might have brought images observed on journeys up the Nile back to Alexandria to be incorporated into the repertoire of the mint. If this was the case, the coin identified above as depicting an Egyptian-style temple of Isis in Alexandria could actually show an Upper Egyptian temple such as that of Isis at Philae.

The idea of artisans deriving inspiration and guidance from "encyclopedias" of visual knowledge may be supported by the evidence of the Palestrina mosaic, wherein some of the animals are helpfully labelled and which appears to present the viewer with a survey of Graeco-Egyptian architecture. It has even been observed that between the Palestrina mosaic and the Marisa paintings it is possible to draw up what appears to be a

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<sup>131</sup> Galen 17a. 606-07.

<sup>132</sup> Cassius Dio 69.11; 76.13.

<sup>133</sup> Meyboom 1995, 54; Istvánfi 2004, 73-74.

comprehensive list of African animals known in the Mediterranean at the time.<sup>134</sup> These synoptic representations seem to indicate an interest in lists and encyclopedic surveys, and may suggest the existence of texts of a similar nature throughout the Hellenistic and Roman world.

However, the non-expert explanation is contradicted by the evidence of the nome coins. It has been shown that these demonstrate a detailed familiarity, not only with the beliefs of the local Hellenised demographic and Hellenistic interpretations of indigenous cults, but with the precise complexities of how the two theologies were intertwined, particularly at the different locations in question. This suggests a more direct connection with the areas involved, as opposed to library research or even on-site “fieldwork”. I propose that the final form of these designs must have been informed at some point in the production process by someone who had not merely toured these regions or read about them from afar, but who understood intimately the culturally complex social structure of the area, and could accurately represent this mingled identity.

Even if some of the information in question was drawn from the resources of the Library of Alexandria, extra-governmental agency would still have been involved, because well-informed individuals personally familiar with local circumstances must have been instrumental in both depositing such information in the Library, and in keeping it up-to-date. Even so, Alexandrian legends suggest that intellectual agency informing the administration was more direct than this.

It has already been noted that the cult of Serapis was reportedly founded by Ptolemy I with the advice of the Egyptian priest Manetho. According to Plutarch, the king commanded to be brought to Alexandria a certain statue that he had seen in a dream, and that upon its arrival was identified as Serapis by one Timotheus, an “ἐξηγητὴν” or interpreter of sacred things, and Manetho “τὸν Σεβεννύτην” – from the Sebennyte nome. These men then “παίθουσι τὸν Πτολεμαῖον” – persuaded Ptolemy – of the truth of their judgment, and the statue was henceforth worshipped as Serapis.<sup>135</sup> While the tale can be

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<sup>134</sup> Meyboom 1995, 47-48.

<sup>135</sup> Plutarch *De Iside et Osiride* 362.

questioned, the fact that Plutarch, writing around the beginning of the second century CE, included it in his work is arguably of great significance. Plutarch specifically portrays a Ptolemaic royal consulting an Egyptian priest on a matter of great spiritual importance. It could be that he was maligning the judgment of a conquered dynasty by showing them foolishly seeking advice from the indigenous population. Yet, to cast aspersion on the foundational circumstances of a cult would be to disparage the cult in general, and the rest of Plutarch's work depicts Serapis and his worship with respect. Therefore, the episode must have been included with the simple expectation of being believed, indicating that, at least in Plutarch's estimation, such an event was both conceivable and acceptable in the second century Roman world.

From what is known of Roman bureaucracy in Egypt, combined with the presence of purely classical designs influenced by external factors and serving imperial interests, the agents primarily responsible for the choice of coin imagery must have been Roman mint officials acting with the authority of the state. Yet, the appearance of undiluted Egyptian themes and accurately detailed representations of contemporary cults implies a sophisticated understanding of indigenous thought. This suggests that individuals deeply familiar with this subject matter were directly involved in the process of designing the coin reverses. With the precedent of the Manetho story in mind, I argue that the reverse designs of Roman Egyptian coins demonstrating a sophisticated understanding of traditional belief systems and local theology were developed in consultation with indigenous religious intellectuals. This would mean that the administration was communicating at some level with members of the Egyptian priesthoods, whose temples were the primary archives of traditional religious culture.

### *Objectives of Design*

It is next necessary to consider why indigenous designs were accepted for use by Roman officials. Roman coins minted elsewhere in the Empire occasionally used

imagery from local mythology.<sup>136</sup> The significant question is, what was the Roman administration trying to convey with the images produced specifically in Egypt, and what does their choice of design indicate about the wider attitude of the Roman administration toward indigenous religious culture? At the most basic level, Alexandrian coin imagery – with religious motifs ranging from purely classical, to culturally compound, to purely Egyptian – could be seen as simply reflecting the culturally complex nature of the country at this time. Similar iconographical syncretism can be observed in many other media from this era, including tombs and even certain temples,<sup>137</sup> such as the temple of Hathor at Dendara with its famous zodiac.<sup>138</sup> Yet, tombs were largely private spaces, and the proliferation of temples to Serapis and Isis in Rome in the last years of the Republic prior to their imperial sanctioning<sup>139</sup> makes it clear that religious expression in the Roman world, even in public contexts, did not always directly concur with official attitudes. Conversely, images on coins represent officially sanctioned themes. Therefore, the coinage of Roman Egypt cannot be understood simply as the natural product of a complex society, but must be examined in the light of an executive agenda.

Many coins clearly display the intentions of the Roman officials in charge of their production. Triumphant images such as “Victory over the Britons” are simple proclamations of imperial power that celebrate a positive event, reinforce public confidence in the competence of the emperor and Empire, discourage would-be foes by emphasising Roman military strength, and generally add to the glory of the empire. The purpose of other design types is more complex.

While figures of deities in other representational media are usually interpreted as objects of reverence in a ritual context, such images on coins were markers of regional identity. Religion was historically an essential element of local identity, and expressing the character of a particular location was a primary objective of coin designers.<sup>140</sup> Thus,

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<sup>136</sup> See Price 2005, 117-21.

<sup>137</sup> See Chapter 3.

<sup>138</sup> Cauville 1997a; 1997b.

<sup>139</sup> See Cassius Dio 40.47.3.

<sup>140</sup> Burnett 1991, 25; Howgo 1992, 2; 2007, 2; Millar 1993, 230, 257.

such a care almost certainly featured in the priorities of Alexandrian mint officials. The presence of purely Egyptian religious motifs shows that classical and compound images were not intended to “convert” local sensibilities to Hellenic tastes, and the mix of cultural types seems more or less representative of the cultural nature of Roman Egypt. By this explanation, compound and purely Egyptian motifs on coins might have been seen as parodies of indigenous culture – that is to say, that the designers of the coin reverses meant to amaze non-indigenous viewers with unorthodox images such as human-headed jars, and to entertain them with oddly shaped indigenous buildings. Yet, if Alexandrian coin designs were meant to express local identity by depicting the culture of the country, the seriousness of this intention must be considered.

Unlike most other coins issued throughout the Empire, the coinage of Egypt was a part of a closed economy, and the currency issued from Alexandria circulated only within the borders of the country.<sup>141</sup> It has also been shown that coinage in Egypt was used extensively throughout the Egyptian countryside, not merely in Alexandria, and would have been seen by indigenous persons as well as Hellenised city dwellers.<sup>142</sup> Mint officials, therefore, would have been aware of an audience of both cultures. Despite the large numbers of foreign merchants and travelers in Alexandria, issues destined for exchange throughout the entire country were probably designed for the majority. It is consequently implausible that such designs were either meant to mock indigenous culture, or to entertain those unfamiliar with such images. Furthermore, the cults of Serapis and Isis, deities often found in compound contexts in coin design as shown above, were well-established and enjoyed full official sanction in Alexandria.<sup>143</sup> The evidence for genuine devotion to these gods by all levels of Egyptian society makes it impossible to accept that their images on Roman coins were viewed with anything other than respect.

If the coin designs of Roman Egypt were intended to express the compound cultural character of Egyptian society at this time genuinely and without scorn, the

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<sup>141</sup> Geissen 2012, 561.

<sup>142</sup> Howgego 1992, 16-27.

<sup>143</sup> See Venit 2012, 113-14.

government may have hoped, not to propagate a notion of Egyptian-ness to outsiders and foreigners, but to acknowledge a sense of unified identity within the province itself. If so, the inclusion of motifs from both classical and indigenous traditions could have been a way of drawing the population together by demonstrating and thereby encouraging cultural communication in Roman Egypt.<sup>144</sup> This implies that, instead of proscribing indigenous religious traditions, or promoting Hellenistic culture to the detriment of the former, the Roman administration in Egypt encouraged its proliferation and approved of its significance to the country's identity. At the very least, the presence of even marginally authentic indigenous motifs on Alexandrian coins demonstrates official tolerance of traditional religious culture. More specifically, well-informed indigenous imagery on Alexandrian coins indicates the willingness of the administration to engage genuinely with the traditional intellectual elite and religious culture of the indigenous population.

#### *Chronological Development*

Finally, the question of chronology must be considered. It is clear from even the limited number of examples referenced above, that the prevalence of indigenous imagery is lowest at the start of the Roman period and increases until the second century CE when a distinct flowering of types occurs. Under the Antonine emperors (138-193 CE) in particular, a greater number of types can be discerned than at any other time in the Roman period, and the vast majority of coins cited above date between the years 138-166 CE, roughly coinciding with the reign of Antoninus Pius. The many striking instances of traditional religious motifs in Egyptian coins within this date range could suggest a positive shift in dominant attitudes toward indigenous religious culture during these years, leading the administration to honor its symbols in official media more frequently. However, this flowering of Egyptian motifs corresponds exactly with the Antonine "explosion" of coin types depicting subjects from history and myth observable throughout the wider Roman Empire, following a majority of coins depicting the virtues

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<sup>144</sup> Howgego, Heurichert, and Burnett 2005, 4.

and achievements of the current emperor.<sup>145</sup> The increase in indigenous types in Egypt at the same time must therefore be linked directly to this wider trend, and not to a change in the social status of indigenous culture. Yet, these types should not be understood as a mere passing fashion either. From the very beginning of the Roman regime, long before this period of flowering, Alexandrian coins displayed indigenous motifs such as crocodiles, ibises, and lotus flowers, as well as depictions of Nilus, Euthenia, and Isis, from the reign of Augustus (30 BCE-14 CE) onwards.<sup>146</sup> Thus, I argue that the uneven representation of indigenous religious iconography on Egyptian coins does not indicate changes in the attitude of the administration toward Egyptian religious culture but instead reflects the influence of variable external factors on subject types.

This is seen clearly in the relationship between reverse design and denomination. As highlighted above, smaller coins frequently depict solitary animals that are included as attributes alongside divinities on larger issues (see e.g. Fig. 4.38, 138-161 CE; Fig. 4.39, 140-141 CE). While the level of complexity and ornamentation of coin reverse designs fluctuated, the changes were tied to the size of the denominations being minted, an issue dictated by much broader economic circumstances.

The correspondence between the increase in indigenous motifs in Egyptian coins and the Antonine increase of mythological and historical types throughout the Empire shows that Alexandrian designers at least partially followed the trends of the wider Roman world in their choice of subject types. What is significant for the question considered here is that when Alexandrian coin designers under the Antonines turned to search increasingly for religious or mythological subjects, they willingly picked up the motifs of Egyptian religion. This shows that in the second century CE the high standing of indigenous religious culture was still as firmly established as it had been under the Ptolemies.

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<sup>145</sup> Noreña 2001, 146-68; Howgego 2005, 5.

<sup>146</sup> Milne 1971, xl; Emmett 2001, 3, 11.

### **4.3. Roman Coins of Alexandria: Conclusion**

If Alexandrian coins were designed by Roman officials in consultation with indigenous religious intellectuals, and the choice to include traditional motifs indicates a positive attitude toward indigenous Egyptian culture, the imagery of these coins is of great significance for the status of indigenous religious culture in the Roman period. Firstly, that Roman officials either actively sought or passively accepted the advice and expertise of indigenous religious intellectuals means necessarily that they must have cooperated to some extent with the Egyptian priestly elite, who at this point in Egyptian history were the keepers of traditional knowledge and theology. Although it is not known whether this relationship extended to particular priesthoods over others, the evidence of detailed traditional knowledge in officially produced designs shows that members of these groups interacted with the upper echelons of political society and thus could not have been socially marginalised. Similarly, if the symbols of Egyptian religion were officially promoted by the Roman government, the administration must have respected and sanctioned the indigenous religious culture from which they were derived.

In conclusion, I have shown that, while the designers of Roman coins were not obliged to express indigenous identity in coin reverse designs (shown, for example, by the absence of any reference to Heracles' Egyptian adventures) and frequently chose to depict classical subjects with outside influences, the ample evidence of compound and purely Egyptian types shows that the administration did not marginalise indigenous religious culture. It is also clear that these coins were not meant to spread a manufactured perception of Egyptian-ness to a primarily Hellenised audience, or to ridicule "backward" indigenous traditions, but instead promoted traditional motifs as a distinguishing characteristic of the country, as worthy of respect as images of Athena, Tyche, and other classical deities portrayed on the coins. Finally, the accuracy with which the complexities of local religion were portrayed shows that Roman officials must have been in communication at some level with the indigenous religious intelligentsia, who have been identified with the Egyptian priestly elite.

In the preceding chapters I argued that the relationship that existed during the Ptolemaic period between the traditional Egyptian priesthoods and the administration deteriorated during Roman times, drawing from evidence of clear economic discrimination against indigenous temples and the resulting impoverishment of these institutions and their representatives. Yet, if coin designers collaborated on certain occasions with indigenous priestly individuals with the approval of the Roman administration, then the culture must have been treated with some level of credibility and respect by the government. Furthermore, the respectful use of Egyptian religious imagery, similar to its use in Alexandrian tombs from this period, shows that indigenous cults enjoyed a prominent and officially sanctioned status in Roman Egypt. The negative evidence of declining building programmes and cessation of hard-stone statuary production under the Romans suggests that the relationship between the indigenous elite and those in power would have been conducted almost entirely on Roman terms. However, like the evidence of Alexandrian funerary art and architecture, the designs of Alexandrian coin reverses demonstrate that indigenous Egyptian religious culture during the Roman period continued to enjoy social prominence.

## CONCLUSIONS

In this thesis I set out to analyse changes in the status of traditional Egyptian religious culture during the Ptolemaic and Roman periods, from the evidence of material culture. Focusing on the public and private activity of both the indigenous and the Hellenised elites, I have looked at monumental temple and civic construction, indigenous hard-stone sculpture, Alexandrian tombs, and Roman coins. Each of these groups of evidence reflects economic and/or social realities, and together they shed new light on how the status of indigenous religious culture developed over the period under study.

Patterns of construction of indigenous temples in the Ptolemaic and Roman periods reveal much about the changing economic and political situation of indigenous religious institutions and the priestly class that represented them. Archaeological and papyrological evidence shows that Egyptian temples were built and rebuilt in great numbers and on a massive scale under the rule of the Ptolemies, indicating the pre-eminence of indigenous religious institutions and their culture at that time. The Ptolemies adopted a long-term policy of cooperation with the indigenous temples primarily in order to promote the security of their dynasty, and as a result, the wealthy and powerful priestly elite were able to influence them to support the construction of sacred buildings. The administration funded this activity by grants of resources and endowments of land that were under state control. These were applied to building projects managed by the indigenous priestly elite, and these projects were credited to the ruler. Variations in the building programme can be traced to dynastic circumstances, but it was the persistent cultural agenda of the priestly class that sustained it.

The different Roman attitude toward the configuration of Egyptian society checked the influence of the priestly class who represented the temples. While initially supporting temple construction, chiefly in order to encourage their acceptance in the first few decades of their rule, the Romans actively diminished the power of the temples at the same time by confiscating sacred land, reducing their autonomy as institutions, and

making them more liable for government levies.<sup>1</sup> The impoverishment of indigenous religious institutions and their representatives, and the latter's consequent loss of position as the economic upper class made it almost impossible for them to initiate the construction of large sacred structures. This led to a decrease in large-scale sacred building activity, and after the beginning of the second century BCE new construction projects were no longer begun.

I next argued that the growth of the classical building programme was promoted by the same factors that caused the falloff of the indigenous architectural tradition. Inversely echoing the decrease in indigenous temple building, a boom in classical civic construction began at the end of the first century CE and continued through the second century, not slowing until the end of the third century. This pattern reveals the economic decline of indigenous religious institutions and of the culture that they represented, to the benefit of the Hellenised urban elite who composed the governing groups of Egypt's urban centres. The papyrological evidence shows that land taken from the temples had been put on the market for purchase by private individuals.<sup>2</sup> These buyers must have been a different group from the priestly elite associated with the temples, who had been offered only the option of renting their confiscated land. The parallelism of these developments indicates that the Hellenised urban elite replaced the indigenous priestly class as the most privileged landowners in Roman-period Egypt outside Alexandria. Operating collectively as municipal governing bodies, the newly enriched group used the revenue of their recently acquired land holdings to finance classical civic buildings, with the state actively encouraging such activity. Thus, the transfer of momentum from indigenous building programmes to classical ones can be traced to a transfer of land from the control of the temples to the Hellenised urban elite. Therefore, monumental building patterns demonstrate broadly that indigenous religious culture held a high status under the Ptolemies, but that after the Roman conquest it fell into economic and political decline.

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<sup>1</sup> See BGU 4.1200, P. Tebt. 2.302, Monson 2012, 287.

<sup>2</sup> W. Chr. 375; BGU 1.156; Johnson 1936, 167-68.

This picture is both supported and qualified by the hard-stone statues I considered next. As an exclusive traditional art form commissioned by holders of indigenous priestly titles and offices, this body of material provides evidence for the social and economic standing of the chief protagonists of indigenous religious culture. It refines the broader narrative of the previous chapter by identifying the Roman conquest as the point after which the systematic impoverishment of indigenous religious institutions and associated elite began. However, it also indicates their continued high social status despite economic deprivation. The inscriptions and contexts of these statues show that most were commissioned by indigenous holders of priestly titles. Since the hard stone from which they were made was an exclusive material available only to elites connected with major institutions, production of these images indicates that the priestly elite at this time were economically well-off. The fact that the temples were full of such statues dating from much earlier to more recent times would have ensured that those who commissioned them knew that they were continuing a hallowed tradition, while the conspicuous display intrinsic to the medium, along with appeals to the living in their inscriptions, shows that the people who commissioned these images and placed them in the temples were emphasising their identity as indigenous priests in a salient setting.

If holders of priestly titles followed indigenous customs in the context of temples that received the patronage of the ruling power, they must have felt secure in their place in society. The iconography of these statues remained primarily traditional while adopting some features from classical art in the second half of the period. While possibly also mirroring greater integration of Hellenised and indigenous culture in general at this time, these developments show that Egypt's priestly elite felt free to commission stylistic experiments in an indigenous art form. The statue inscriptions show that indigenous people could hold state office under the foreign administration as well as maintaining their traditional religious titles. Thus, the indigenous priestly elite clearly enjoyed a high level of cultural confidence and social status during the Ptolemaic period.

By contrast, the halting of hard-stone statue production after the Roman conquest indicates that the indigenous priestly elite commissioning these statues lost the

considerable means with which they had previously commissioned these statues. Like monumental temple and civic construction, therefore, hard-stone private sculpture, suggests strongly that the new Roman administration deprived indigenous religion and its protagonists of the economic status they had maintained under the Ptolemies. Yet, before the art form disappeared entirely, the fact that its final poor-quality incarnations in soft stones exhibit no change in style from previous hard-stone examples shows that the elite continued to follow tradition despite having to employ less skilled craftsmen and less expensive media. Thus, I argued that the disappearance of hard-stone statuary is symptomatic of a loss of economic means, not a decline in its wider status.

In the next chapter, I asserted that the maintenance of high social and cultural status by indigenous religion after the disappearance of hard-stone statues is demonstrated by Alexandrian funerary art and architecture. The inclusion of traditional elements and sacred motifs in Alexandrian tombs both before and after the Roman conquest shows that the Hellenised elite adopted indigenous religious customs on an equal level with classical traditions.

I described how Alexandrian tombs shifted significantly from simple Greek-style graves to monumental underground complexes inspired to a large extent by the tombs of pharaonic Egypt and characterised by indigenous architectural features. This expensive development of burial practice demonstrates the profound influence of indigenous beliefs. Similarly, despite compositional discrepancies, thematically accurate depictions of indigenous funerary scenes in elite tomb spaces demonstrate that leading members of Alexandrian society engaged with traditional Egyptian narratives of death and rebirth. Far from simply expressing fashionable tastes, it is clear that very wealthy Alexandrians valued traditional religious motifs for their connotations of rebirth in the hereafter and employed this imagery in tandem with their adoption of related beliefs.

Proof of mummification, depictions of Egyptian funerary practices, and elements such as ritual statues and relief images of priests suggest further that the groups creating the tombs participated in indigenous religious rites involving Egyptian priests. Thus, despite administrative and economic changes, Alexandrian funerary art shows that

Egyptian religious culture was favoured in some contexts under both Ptolemaic and Roman rule. The higher incidence of indigenous scenes in Roman period tombs may even demonstrate that adherence to indigenous religious practice became more widespread in later times. It indicates at least that the deprivation seen in the decline of temple building and statue production under the Romans did not extend to this cultural sphere.

This last point is argued in more detail in the final chapter, in which I sought to establish that religious motifs on the designs of Alexandrian coin reverses show that the Roman administration officially recognised, respected, and promoted indigenous religious culture. Furthermore, the level of accuracy and relevance with which these motifs were depicted suggests that these images were designed by Roman officials and artists in consultation with indigenous religious specialists. This finding is a further indicator of continued respect for and understanding of indigenous religious culture in the Roman period.

Since coinage is fundamentally connected to government, imagery on Alexandrian coins displays official Roman attitudes. The Romans used coin iconography to publicise ideas they supported, as well as to characterise the local region in a positive way. Thus, the appearance of indigenous religious motifs on coins in Egypt shows that the Romans promoted traditional motifs in a positive spirit as an important feature of the province. The occurrence of these images alongside classical motifs, which were also used elsewhere in the Empire, suggests furthermore that indigenous and classical religious cultures were valued equally. The indigenous specialists consulted must have been members of the Egyptian priestly elite who maintained traditional knowledge and theology. Thus, the status of indigenous religious culture evidently remained high throughout the Roman period.

In the first two chapters I argued that the evidence of discrimination against indigenous temples leading to the impoverishment of these institutions and their representatives in the Roman period paralleled the deterioration of the relationship that had previously existed between the traditional Egyptian priesthoods and the

administration. However, the respectful use of Egyptian religious imagery in Alexandrian funerary art from the same period and on Roman coins minted in Alexandria shows that indigenous cults enjoyed a prominent and officially sanctioned status under both the Ptolemies and Romans. Furthermore, if the Alexandrian elite patronised indigenous priestly individuals for their funerary rites and the Roman administration collaborated with them on coin designs, then the culture that they represented must have been accepted and actively employed by the ruling, culturally Hellenistic class. It therefore clearly continued to enjoy social prominence.

The complex factors contributing to the eclipse of pagan religion in general and the rise of Christianity lie beyond the scope of this thesis. For the time period between the founding of Alexandria in 331 BCE and the Edict of Milan in 313 CE, I chose to address four groups of evidence on the basis of their distinct and particular significance; however, several other cultural spheres could be considered also in support of these conclusions. For example, continued respect for indigenous religion is also seen in other cultural domains, such as in the evidence for state involvement in traditional animal cults,<sup>3</sup> while the economic situation of the indigenous elites can be tracked in the production of costly burial goods such as hard-stone sarcophagi, which demonstrate vast private expenditure in a similar way to statues.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, there is much scope for future work on additional areas such as these to develop this research further. Although the material presented in this study is not well suited to quantification in this context due to the scale of these bodies of evidence, a more detailed individual examination of any one of these groups may shed more light on the questions considered here. The religious approach taken here is valuable in that religion was central to ancient life, and therefore has broad implications for many different sectors of society. While forms of expression used for religious purposes, such as funerary rites, sacred construction, etc., would have naturally been influenced by considerations of wealth, status, and political concerns, a

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<sup>3</sup> See e.g. Thompson 2012, 106-07.

<sup>4</sup> See e.g. Maspero 1908, 73-86.

clearer picture of the circumstances under discussion can be obtained by examining these individual considerations more generally.

In sum, I have argued that the categories of material evidence considered in this thesis demonstrate that indigenous religious culture largely maintained its privileged economic and social status throughout the Ptolemaic period, despite changes in media, style, and patterns of production. Persistent patterns of temple building, the production of hard-stone traditional statues, and the development of tombs in Alexandria influenced by indigenous funerary beliefs and using indigenous religious iconography show the dynamic continuity of traditional religious and artistic culture. The decline in temple construction and hard-stone sculpture and increase in non-indigenous building activity after the first century CE show that the individuals and institutions representing Egyptian religious culture were disadvantaged economically under the Romans. However, the continued use of indigenous religious motifs in Alexandrian tomb décor and on Roman period coins shows that the cultural importance and social standing of indigenous religion were preserved. In spite of economic decline and marginalisation, therefore, the wider status of indigenous religious culture remained high under both the Ptolemies and the Romans, resulting in profound effects that can be discerned in many different aspects of Egyptian society.



## ABBREVIATIONS

AE = *L'année épigraphique*

ArchivBeih. = *Archiv für Papyrusforschung und verwandte Gebiete. Beiheften. Untersuchungen zur Chronologie der ersten Ptolemäer auf Grund der Papyri*. Ed. E. Meyer. 1925. Leipzig; Berlin.

BGU = *Berliner griechische Urkunden. Ägyptische Urkunden aus den Staatlichen Museen Berlin, Griechische Urkunden*. 1895. Berlin.

BM = British Museum.

Cairo CG = Cairo, Egyptian Museum, Catalogue Général.

CIL = *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*.

C. P. Herm. = *Corpus Papyrorum Hermopolitanorum I (C.P.Herm.)*. Ed. C. Wessely. 1905.

IGP = *Inscriptiones graecae Ptolemaicae: Sammlung griechischer Ptolemäer-Inschriften*. Ed. M. L. Strack. 1976. Chicago.

I. L. Alg. = *Inscriptiones latines de l'Algérie*. Eds S. Gsell and H. -G. Pflaum. 1957. Paris.

ILS = *Inscriptiones Latinae selectae*. Ed. H. Dessau. 1962. Berlin.

IRT = *Inscriptions of Roman Tripolitania*. Eds J. M. Reynolds and J. B. Ward-Perkins. 2009.

M. Chr. = L. Mitteis and U. Wilcken, *Grundzüge und Chrestomathie der Papyruskunde*, II Bd. *Juristischer Teil*, II Hälfte *Chrestomathie*. 1912. Leipzig; Berlin.

O. Wilck. = *Griechische Ostraka aus Aegypten und Nubien*, Ed. U. Wilcken. 1899. Leipzig; Berlin.

OGIS = *Orientalis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae*. Ed. W. Dittenberger. 1903-1905. Leipzig.

P. Amh. = *The Amherst Papyri, Being an Account of the Greek Papyri in the Collection of the Right Hon. Lord Amherst of Hackney, F.S.A. at Didlington Hall, Norfolk*, Eds B.P. Grenfell and A.S. Hunt. London.

P. Bacch. = "The Archives of the Temple of Soknobraisis at Bacchias," Ed. E. H. Gilliam. *YCS*. 10. 1947. 179-281.

P. Bad. = *Veröffentlichungen aus den badischen Papyrus-Sammlungen*. Heidelberg.

P. BMFA = Papyrus, Boston Museum of Fine Arts.

P. Bour. = *Les Papyrus Bouriant*. Ed. P. Collart. 1926. Paris.

P. Cair. Zen. = *Zenon Papyri*. Ed. C. C. Edgar. 1925. Cairo.

P. Carlsb. = *The Carlsberg Papyri: On the Primaeval Ocean*. Ed. M. J. Smith. 2002. Copenhagen.

P. Giss. = *Griechische Papyri im Museum des oberhessischen Geschichtsvereins zu Giessen*. Eds O. Eger, E. Kornemann, and P.M. Meyer. 1910—1912. Leipzig; Berlin.

P. Jumilhac = *Le Papyrus Jumilhac*. Ed. J. Vandier. 1961. Paris.

P. Köln. = *Kölner Papyri*. Ed. B. Kramer and R. Hübner. 1976. Opladen.

P. Lond. = *Greek Papyri in the British Museum*. Eds F. G. Kenyon and H. I. Bell. 1907, 1917. London.

P. Oxy. = *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*. Eds B. P. Grenfell, A. S. Hunt et al. 1898. London.

- P. Ryl. = *Catalogue of the Greek and Latin Papyri in the John Rylands Library, Manchester*. Manchester.
- PSI = *Papiri greci e latini*. (Pubblicazioni della Società Italiana per la ricerca dei papiri greci e latini in Egitto). Florence.
- P. Tebt. = *The Tebtunis Papyri*. Eds B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt. 1907. London.
- P. Turner = *Papyri Greek and Egyptian Edited by Various Hands in Honour of Eric Gardner Turner on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday*, Eds P. J. Parsons, J. R. Rea et al. 1981. London.
- P. Vindob. Gr. = *Papyrus Vindobonensis Graeca*.
- SB = *Sammelbuch griechischer Urkunden aus Ägypten*. Eds F. Preisigke et al. 1915.
- SEG = *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum*. Eds P. Roussel et al. 1923.
- UPZ = *Urkunden der Ptolemäerzeit (ältere Funde): Papyri aus Oberägypten*. Ed. U. Wilcken. 1935-1957. Berlin.
- W. Chr. = L. Mitteis and U. Wilcken, *Grundzüge und Chrestomathie der Papyruskunde*, I Bd. *Historischer Teil*, II Hälfte *Chrestomathie*. 1912. Leipzig; Berlin.

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## Appendix 1.1

### Ptolemaic and Roman Temples with Significant Remains

After Arnold (1999, 320-24, not noted separately), with additions from Hölbl (2001, appendix\*), for the Ptolemaic period, and from Klotz (2012b, 227-382\*\*) and Minas-Nerpel (2012, 362-77\*\*\*) for the Roman period, as well as suggestions from Baines (personal communication).

This is a compilation of known Egyptian-style temples from Ptolemy I onward, arranged chronologically by date of construction and in approximate geographical order from north to south. The list is not comprehensive, because the large majority of the structures and extensions built during these periods will have been completely lost or are only reported in brief notes; nonetheless it is hoped that what is presented here provides a sense of general patterns of construction.

Dates of construction mostly derive from inscriptions, although the structures were often begun earlier. Most major temples were built in stages, with the pronaos and enclosure wall typically being added to the original core structures. Decoration generally continued long after construction was completed. The list primarily covers construction, while noting decoration particularly for the Roman period.

#### Ptolemaic Period

##### Ptolemy I Soter (306-282 BCE)

- Tanis – new east gate of Amun temple
- Tarraneh (Teremuthis) – Hathor-Thermuthis temple
- Naucratis – temple of Amun\*
- Tebtynis – Soknebtunis temple
- Per-khefet – unexplored temple
- Sharuna – temple of Osiris\*
- Cusae (el-Qusiya) – unexplored temple
- Tuna el-Gebel (near Hermopolis\*) – chapels in ibis-galleries

##### Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285-246 BCE)

- Tanis – small chapel
- Pithom – fortress temple
- Behbeit el-Hagar – extension and decoration of Isis temple\*
- Sebennytos – decoration of Onuris-Shu temple\*
- Naucratis – unexplored building
- Saqqara – Anubieion\*
- Arsinoe/Krokodilopolis – new Sobek Shedet temple
- Theadelphia – Pnephoros temple
- Bacchias – Sokanobkonneus temple
- Medinet Madi – extension of Isis-Renenutet temple\*
- Dendera – extension of the 30th Dynasty birth house
- Coptos – new Min temple
- Qus – naos and decoration of Haroeris and Heqat temple (?)
- Medamud – *sed*-festival gate and other buildings
- Karnak – gate of Mut complex; decoration of temple of Opet\*
- el-Kubaniya – Isis sanctuary\*
- Philae – beginning or continuation of Isis temple and birth house
- el-Kharga Oasis – continuation of decoration of Hibis temple\*

##### Ptolemy III Euergetes I (246-221 BCE)

- Alexandria – Serapeum\*

Canopus – temple of Osiris\*  
 Akhmim (Panopolis) – new main structure of Min temple  
 Diospolis parva (Hiw) – chapel of the deified Udjarenes in temple complex  
 Medamud – birth house (?) begun and a gate  
 Karnak – gate of Khonsu temple (Bab el-Amara); entrance kiosk of Ptah temple; Opet temple begun or continued  
 Karnak-north – processional approach; north gate (Bab el-‘Abd)  
 Esna – small temple of Khnum\*  
 Kom el-Deir (Esna-north) – Khnum temple sanctuary with pronaos  
 Edfu – Horus temple begun  
 Aswan – Isis temple  
 Philae – extension of birth house  
 Qasr el-Ghueda (el-Kharga Oasis) – addition of pronaos  
 Hibis (el-Kharga Oasis) – *Shena wab* of the Amun temple

#### Ptolemy IV Philopator (221-205 BCE)

Tanis – Mut/Anta temple with entrance kiosk  
 Alexandria – Harpocrates naos in Serapeum  
 Memphis – east gate in enclosure of Ptah temple\*  
 Akhmim (Panopolis) – addition of pronaos to Min temple  
 Cusae (el-Qusiya) – temple of Hathor\*  
 Antaeopolis (Qau el-Kebir) – new main temple structure  
 Medamud – continuation of birth house; gate; Montu temple\*  
 Karnak-north – northern gate at temple of Montu\*  
 Karnak – Osiris tomb  
 Deir el-Medina – new Hathor temple  
 el-Tod – adaptation of Montu temple with hypostyle, pronaos, and enclosure walls  
 Edfu – completion of main structure of Horus temple  
 Elephantine – unexplored Osiris tomb  
 Philae – Arensnuphis temple  
 Aswan area – temple of Isis\*; small temple on Sehel island\*,  
 Qasr el-Ghueda (el-Kharga Oasis) – work on temple\*  
 Dakka – temple of Thoth\*

#### Ptolemy V Epiphanes (c. 193-176 BCE)

Leontopolis – unexplored Mihos temple  
 Memphis – restoration works; newly constructed Anubieion; work on the Bubastieion, decoration of Apieion in Ptah temple complex\*  
 Esna – new Khnum temple  
 Edfu – inscriptions in temple of Horus  
 Kom el-Deir – decoration of Pi-Khnum  
 el-Kab – restoration of unknown temple building  
 Philae – first pylon of Isis temple; chapel of Imhotep; extension of Arensnuphis temple

#### Ptolemy VI Philometor (180-164, 163-145 BCE)

Tanis – new temple complex of Horus (?)  
 Antaeopolis (Qau el-Kebir) – pronaos of Anty temple  
 Diospolis parva (Hiw) – Hathor temple with Osiris chapel  
 Dendera – extension of Isis temple  
 Medamud – temple of Montu\*  
 Deir el-Medina – relief decoration of Hathor temple\*  
 Armant – unexplored building  
 Esna – naos of temple of Khnum\*  
 Edfu – decoration of hypostyle hall in temple of Horus\*  
 Kom Ombo – new Horus and Sobek temple

Elephantine – pronaos of Khnum temple, new Satet temple with a kiosk  
 Philae – second pylon of Isis temple; court/pronaos of Isis temple; entrance kiosk of  
 Arensnuphis temple; small Hathor temple  
 Dakka – extension of pronaos in temple of Thoth\*  
 Dabod – extension of Isis temple; chapel of Thoth,\*

Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II (170-163, 145-116 BCE)

Taposiris Magna – Osiris (?) temple  
 Xoïs – temple\*  
 Athribis (Wannina) – Repyt temple\*  
 Dendera – barque chapel; propylaea of birth house\*  
 Coptos – small gate  
 Qus – inner monumental gate and temple of Haroeris/Heqat temple  
 Medamud – adaptation of Montu temple with pylon, forecourt, and pronaos  
 Karnak – continuation of Opet temple, decoration of New Kingdom Khonsu temple\*  
 Deir el-Medina – small birth house and enclosure wall; decoration of temple\*  
 Medinet Habu – pylon and entrance kiosk of smaller Amun temple  
 Qasr el-‘Aguz – Thoth temple  
 Deir el-Bahari – sanctuary of Imhotep and kiosk on uppermost terrace  
 el-Tod – pronaos in front of Middle Kingdom Montu temple\*  
 el-Kab – hemispeos,\* temple\*  
 Edfu – completion of naos of Horus temple;\* addition of pronaos; birth house; roof  
 Kiosk;\* pylon;\* enclosure wall\*  
 Kom Ombo – birth house; decoration of temple\*  
 Elephantine – Osiris/Khnum temple; completion of Khnum temple; addition of  
 pronaos of Satet temple  
 Aswan – decoration of Isis temple\*  
 Philae – extension of birth house; pair of obelisks at first pylon; second east colonnade;\*  
 extension of Hathor temple; extension of Arensnuphis temple  
 Dakka – addition of pronaos to Thoth temple  
 Dabod – decoration of Amun temple\*

Ptolemy IX Soter II (116-107, 88-81 BCE)

Athribis (Wannina) – new Triphis temple  
 Dendara – temple of Isis; hypostyle; ambulatory\*  
 Qus – two pylons\*  
 Karnak-north – entrance porch of Amun-ra-Montu temple  
 Karnak – decoration of Ptah temple and Khonsu temple\*  
 Deir el-Medina – relief decoration\*  
 Medinet Habu – hypostyle; pylon; and portico of small temple\*  
 el-Hilla (Contralatopolis) – decoration of Isis temple\*  
 el-Kab – kiosk of desert temple of Nekhbet; pronaos of Amenhotep III temple  
 Edfu – work on enclosure wall; entrance kiosk of birth house  
 Kalabsha – Mandulis temple (now on Elephantine island)

Ptolemy X Alexander I (107-88 BCE)

Banawit – unexplored temple  
 Dendera – ambulatory of Isis temple  
 Qus – outer monumental gate of Haroeris/Heqat temple  
 Medinet Habu – continuation of work in Amun temple

Ptolemy XII Neos Dionysos (80-58, 55-51 BCE)

Athribis (Wannina) – birth house of Repyt temple\*  
 Akhmim (Panopolis) – unexplored building

Dendera – construction of main part of Hathor temple replacing earlier Ptolemaic structure

Coptos – south gate at Geb temple

Medamud – kiosks in front of Montu temple\*

Karnak – smaller buildings, chapel of Osiris;\* reliefs\*

Deir el-Medina – gate in enclosure wall, relief decoration\*

Edfu – decoration of forecourt and pylon of Horus temple

Kom Ombo – monumental gate and pronaos

Philae – transfer of kiosk of Nectanebo I to new location near entrance to island, reliefs in temple of Isis and birth house\*

Bigga – pronaos and inscriptions of Osiris temple\*

#### Cleopatra VII Philopator (51-30 BCE)

Dendera – decoration of Hathor temple

Coptos – bark chapel of Geb temple; chapel of Cleopatra and Caesarion\*

Kom Ombo – reliefs\*

Armant – birth house of Montu temple

## Roman Period

### Augustus (30 BCE-14 CE)

- Dendera – decoration of interior of Hathor temple and sanctuary of Isis temple; east gateway\*\*\*
- el-Qal‘a – new Isis temple
- Shanhur – Mut/Isis temple
- Deir el-Shelwit – Isis temple
- Medamud – decoration of gate in temenos\*\*
- Karnak –first pylon, decoration of Opet temple and Khonsu temple\*\*
- Armant – decoration of exterior wall\*\*
- Kom Ombo – forecourt and gate
- Elephantine – pylon and cult terrace of temple of Khnum
- Philae – kiosk of “Trajan”; colonnades of forecourt; Augustus temple
- Biggeh – pylon of Osiris temple
- Dabod – extension of temple
- Qertassi – kiosk
- Taffeh – south Isis temple; north Isis temple
- Kalabsha – new Mandulis temple; door, now in the Egyptian Museum, Berlin
- Dendur – Isis, Pedesi, and Pihor temple and cult terrace
- Dakka – extension of Thoth temple
- Maharraqa – Isis and Serapis temple
- ‘Ain Amur – Amun temple
- ‘Ain Birbiyeh (Dakhleh Oasis) – Amun-nakht temple and gate

### Tiberius (14-37 CE)

- Dendera – pronaos of Hathor temple
- Medamud – monumental gate
- Karnak – restoration of Middle Kingdom court; decoration of gateway of Ptah temple, decoration in Khonsu and Opet temples\*\*
- Edfu – cartouches on pylon\*\*\*
- Philae – extension of Hathor temple

### Caligula (37-41 CE)

- Coptos – Geb temple: two gates

### Claudius (41-54 CE)

- Dendera – decoration of pronaos\*\*\*
- el-Qal‘a – decoration of Isis temple completed\*\*\*
- Medinet Habu – small gate\*\*
- Esna – construction of pronaos
- Philae – Harendotes temple

### Nero (54-68 CE)

- Karanis – south temple (Pnepheros and Petesukhos)
- Dime – two temples
- Dionysias (Qasr Qarun) – Sobek temple
- Tuna el-Gebel – three small temples
- Dendera – new birth house for Hathor temple; decoration of pronaos and east gateway\*\*\*, stone enclosure wall begun (never completed)\*\*\*
- Deir el-Haggar (Dakhleh Oasis) – Amun temple
- Ismant el-Kharab (Dakhleh Oasis) – Tutu temple

Galba (June 68 – January 69 CE)

- ‘Ain Birbiyeh (Dakhleh Oasis) – cartouches\*\*
- Deir el-Shelwit – temple and propylon\*\*

Vespasian (69-79 CE)

- Medamud – cartouches\*\*
- Nag‘ el-Hagar – unexplored temple
- Deir el-Haggar (Dakhleh Oasis) – Amun temple
- Deir el-Shelwit – decoration of propylon\*\*

Titus (79-81 CE)

- Deir el-Haggar (Dakhleh Oasis) – Amun temple
- ‘Ain Birbiyeh (Dakhleh Oasis) – Amun-nakht temple

Domitian (81-96 CE)

- Hermopolis Magna – temple in Nehemet-‘awy complex
- Dendera – monumental main entrance
- Medamud – decoration of temple\*\*
- Karnak – modifications to contra-temple\*\*
- Medinet Habu – propylon\*\*
- Deir el-Haggar (Dakhleh Oasis) – Amun temple
- ‘Ain Birbiyeh (Dakhleh Oasis) – Amun-nakht temple
- Deir el-Shelwit – decoration of propylon\*\*
- Kom el-Resras – unexplored temple
- Aswan – Khnum/Satet/Anuket temple
- Qasr el-Dush – Isis/Serapis/Horus temple

Nerva (96-98 CE)

- Diospolis parva (Hiw) – unexplored Hathor (?) temple

Trajan (98-117 CE)

- Akhmim – monumental gate of Min temple
- Medamud – decoration of exterior walls \*\*
- Shanhur – extension of Mut and Isis temple with pronaos
- Qasr el-Dush – forecourt and gate of Isis temple

Hadrian (117-138 CE)

- Armant – pronaos of Montu temple, cartouches\*\*
- Medinet Habu – cartouches\*\*
- Ismant el-Kharab (Dakhleh Oasis) – Tutu temple
- Deir el-Haggar (Dakhleh Oasis) – Amun temple
- ‘Ain Birbiyeh (Dakhleh Oasis) – Amun-nakht temple

Antoninus Pius (138-161 CE)

- Dendera – east gate leading to birth house of Isis
- Medinet Habu – entrance kiosk and court of Amun temple begun; decoration of Amun temple\*\*
- Armant – stone gate
- Ismant el-Kharab (Dakhleh Oasis) – Tutu temple
- Deir el-Rumi – decoration of temple\*\*
- Medamud – cartouches\*\*
- el-Tod – decoration of temple\*\*
- el-Hilla – addition of pronaos to Isis temple
- Kom Mir – decoration of Anuket temple
- Nadura – temple A; temple B

Qasr 'Ain el-Zaiyan – Amun temple  
 Near Qasr el-Dush – temple  
 Near el-Deir – temple  
 Belad el-Rum – “Doric” temple  
 Deir el-Shelwit – decoration of naos\*\*

Marcus Aurelius (161-180 CE) and Lucius Verus (161-169 CE)  
 Karanis – “north temple”  
 Asfun el-Matana – addition of pronaos  
 Kom Ombo – decoration of “Emperors’ Corridor”\*\*\*

Commodus (180-192 CE)  
 Tahta – unexplored building  
 Karnak – inscribed pillar\*\*  
 Kom Ombo – cartouches in “Emperors’ Corridor”\*\*\*

Septimius Severus (193–211 CE), Caracalla (198–217), and Geta (198–211)  
 Esna – decoration of Khnum temple continued\*\*\*

Macrinus Augustus and Diadumenianus (217–218 CE)  
 Kom Ombo – decoration of outer corridor wall\*\*\*

Decius (249-251 CE)  
 Esna – decoration of Khnum temple\*\*\*

Maximinus Daia (305-313 CE)  
 Tahta – cartouches in the temple of Horus\*\*\*

## Appendix 1.2

## Sites with Known Ptolemaic and Roman Building Activity

## ‘Ain Amur

Augustus (30 BCE-14 CE)

## ‘Ain Birbiyeh (Dakhleh Oasis)

Augustus (30 BCE-14 CE)

Galba (June 68 – January 69 CE)\*\*

Titus (79-81 CE)

Domitian (81-96 CE)

Hadrian (117-138 CE)

## Akhmim (Panopolis)

Ptolemy III Euergetes I (246-221 BCE)

Ptolemy IV Philopator (221-205 BCE)

Ptolemy XII Neos Dionysos (80-58, 55-51 BCE)

Trajan (98-117 CE)

## Alexandria

Ptolemy III Euergetes I (246-221 BCE)\*

Ptolemy IV Philopator (221-205 BCE)\*

## Antaeopolis (Qau el-Kebir)

Ptolemy IV Philopator (221-205 BCE)

Ptolemy VI Philometor (180-164, 163-145 BCE)

## Armant

Ptolemy VI Philometor (180-164, 163-145 BCE)

Cleopatra VII Philopator (51-30 BCE)

Augustus (30 BCE-14 CE)\*\*

Hadrian (117-138 CE)

Antoninus Pius (138-161 CE)

## Arsinoe/Krokodilopolis

Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285-246 BCE)

## Asfun el-Matana

Marcus Aurelius (161-180 CE) and Lucius Verus (161-169 CE)

## Aswan

Ptolemy IV Philopator (221-205 BCE)\*

Ptolemy III Euergetes I (246-221 BCE)

Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II (170-163, 145-116 BCE)\*

Domitian (81-96 CE)

## Athribis (Wannina)

Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II (170-163, 145-116 BCE)\*

Ptolemy IX Soter II (116-107, 88-81 BCE)

Ptolemy XII Neos Dionysos (80-58, 55-51 BCE)

## Bacchias

Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285-246 BCE)

## Banawit

Ptolemy X Alexander I (107-88 BCE)

## Behbeit el-Hagar

Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285-246 BCE)

## Belad el-Rum

Antoninus Pius (138-161 CE)

## Bigga

Ptolemy XII Neos Dionysos (80-58, 55-51 BCE)

Augustus (30 BCE-14 CE)

## Canopus

- Ptolemy III Euergetes I (246-221 BCE)\*
- Coptos
- Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285-246 BCE)
  - Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II (170-163, 145-116 BCE)
  - Ptolemy XII Neos Dionysos (80-58, 55-51 BCE)
  - Cleopatra VII Philopator (51-30 BCE)
  - Caligula (37-41 CE)
- Cusae (el-Qusiya)
- Ptolemy I Soter (306-282 BCE)
  - Ptolemy IV Philopator (221-205 BCE)\*
- Dabod
- Ptolemy VI Philometor (180-164, 163-145 BCE)
  - Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II (170-163, 145-116 BCE)\*
  - Augustus (30 BCE-14 CE)
- Dakka
- Ptolemy IV Philopator (221-205 BCE)\*
  - Ptolemy VI Philometor (180-164, 163-145 BCE)\*
  - Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II (170-163, 145-116 BCE)
  - Augustus (30 BCE-14 CE)
- Deir el-Bahari
- Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II (170-163, 145-116 BCE)
- Deir el-Haggar (Dakhleh Oasis)
- Nero (54-68 CE)
  - Vespasian (69-79 CE)
  - Titus (79-81 CE)
  - Domitian (81-96 CE)
  - Hadrian (117-138 CE)
- Deir el-Medina
- Ptolemy IV Philopator (221-205 BCE)
  - Ptolemy VI Philometor (180-164, 163-145 BCE)\*
  - Ptolemy XII Neos Dionysos (80-58, 55-51 BCE)
  - Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II (170-163, 145-116 BCE)
  - Ptolemy IX Soter II (116-107, 88-81 BCE)\*
- Deir el-Rumi
- Antoninus Pius (138-161 CE)\*\*
- Deir el-Shelwit
- Augustus (30 BCE-14 CE)
  - Galba (June 68 – January 69 CE)
  - Vespasian (69-79 CE)\*\*
  - Domitian (81-96 CE)\*\*
  - Antoninus Pius (138-161 CE)\*\*
- Dendera
- Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285-246 BCE)
  - Ptolemy VI Philometor (180-164, 163-145 BCE)
  - Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II (170-163, 145-116 BCE)
  - Ptolemy IX Soter II (116-107, 88-81 BCE)\*
  - Ptolemy X Alexander I (107-88 BCE)
  - Ptolemy XII Neos Dionysos (80-58, 55-51 BCE)
  - Cleopatra VII Philopator (51-30 BCE)
  - Augustus (30 BCE-14 CE)
  - Tiberius (14-37 CE)
  - Claudius (41-54 CE)\*\*\*
  - Nero (54-68 CE)
  - Domitian (81-96 CE)

- Antoninus Pius (138-161 CE)
- Dendur  
Augustus (30 BCE-14 CE)
- Dime  
Nero (54-68 CE)
- Dionysias (Qasr Qarûn)  
Nero (54-68 CE)
- Diospolis parva (Hiw)  
Ptolemy III Euergetes I (246-221 BCE)  
Ptolemy VI Philometor (180-164, 163-145 BCE)  
Nerva (96-98 CE)
- Edfu  
Ptolemy III Euergetes I (246-221 BCE)  
Ptolemy IV Philopator (221-205 BCE)  
Ptolemy V Epiphanes (c. 193-176 BCE)\*  
Ptolemy VI Philometor (180-164, 163-145 BCE)\*  
Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II (170-163, 145-116 BCE)  
Ptolemy IX Soter II (116-107, 88-81 BCE)  
Ptolemy XII Neos Dionysos (80-58, 55-51 BCE)  
Tiberius (14-37 CE)\*\*\*
- el-Hilla (Contralatopolis)  
Ptolemy IX Soter II (116-107, 88-81 BCE)  
Antoninus Pius (138-161 CE)
- el-Kab  
Ptolemy V Epiphanes (c. 193-176 BCE)  
Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II (170-163, 145-116 BCE)\*  
Ptolemy IX Soter II (116-107, 88-81 BCE)
- el-Qal'a  
Augustus (30 BCE-14 CE)  
Claudius (41-54 CE)\*\*\*
- el-Kubaniya  
Ptolemy I Soter (306-282 BCE)\*
- el-Tod  
Ptolemy IV Philopator (221-205 BCE)  
Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II (170-163, 145-116 BCE)\*  
Antoninus Pius (138-161 CE)\*\*
- Elephantine  
Ptolemy VI Philometor (180-164, 163-145 BCE)  
Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II (170-163, 145-116 BCE)  
Augustus (30 BCE-14 CE)
- Esna  
Ptolemy III Euergetes I (246-221 BCE)\*  
Ptolemy VI Philometor (180-164, 163-145 BCE)\*  
Ptolemy V Epiphanes (c. 193-176 BCE)  
Claudius (41-54 CE)  
Septimius Severus (193–211 CE), Caracalla (198–217), and Geta (198–211)\*\*\*  
Decius (249–51 CE)\*\*\*
- Hermopolis Magna  
Domitian (81-96 CE)
- Hibis (el-Kharga Oasis)  
Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285-246 BCE)\*  
Ptolemy III Euergetes I (246-221 BCE)
- Is mant el-Kharab (Dakhleh Oasis)  
Nero (54-68 CE)  
Hadrian (117-138 CE)

- Antoninus Pius (138-161 CE)
- Kalabsha  
Ptolemy IX Soter II (116-107, 88-81 BCE)  
Augustus (30 BCE-14 CE)
- Karanis  
Nero (54-68 CE)  
Marcus Aurelius (161-180 CE) and Lucius Verus (161-169 CE)
- Karnak  
Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285-246 BCE)  
Ptolemy III Euergetes I (246-221 BCE)  
Ptolemy IV Philopator (221-205 BCE)  
Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II (170-163, 145-116 BCE)  
Ptolemy IX Soter II (116-107, 88-81 BCE)\*  
Ptolemy XII Neos Dionysos (80-58, 55-51 BCE)  
Augustus (30 BCE-14 CE)\*\*  
Tiberius (14-37 CE)\*\*  
Domitian (81-96 CE)\*\*  
Commodus (180-192 CE)\*\*
- Karnak-north  
Ptolemy III Euergetes I (246-221 BCE)  
Ptolemy IV Philopator (221-205 BCE)\*  
Ptolemy IX Soter II (116-107, 88-81 BCE)
- Kom el-Deir (Esna-north)  
Ptolemy III Euergetes I (246-221 BCE)  
Ptolemy V Epiphanes (c. 193-176 BCE)  
(nearby) Antoninus Pius (138-161 CE)
- Kom el-Resras  
Domitian (81-96 CE)
- Kom Mir  
Antoninus Pius (138-161 CE)
- Kom Ombo  
Ptolemy VI Philometor (180-164, 163-145 BCE)  
Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II (170-163, 145-116 BCE)  
Ptolemy XII Neos Dionysos (80-58, 55-51 BCE)  
Cleopatra VII Philopator (51-30 BCE)\*  
Augustus (30 BCE-14 CE)  
Marcus Aurelius (161-180 CE) and Lucius Verus (161-169 CE)\*\*  
Commodus (180-192 CE)\*\*  
Macrinus Augustus and Diadumenianus (217-218 CE)
- Leontopolis  
Ptolemy V Epiphanes (c. 193-176 BCE)
- Maharraqa  
Augustus (30 BCE-14 CE)
- Medamud  
Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285-246 BCE)  
Ptolemy III Euergetes I (246-221 BCE)  
Ptolemy IV Philopator (221-205 BCE)  
Ptolemy VI Philometor (180-164, 163-145 BCE)\*  
Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II (170-163, 145-116 BCE)  
Ptolemy XII Neos Dionysos (80-58, 55-51 BCE)\*  
Augustus (30 BCE-14 CE)\*\*  
Tiberius (14-37 CE)  
Vespasian (69-79 CE)\*\*  
Domitian (81-96 CE)\*\*

- Trajan (98-117 CE)\*\*  
 Antoninus Pius (138-161 CE)\*\*
- Medinet Habu  
 Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II (170-163, 145-116 BCE)  
 Ptolemy IX Soter II (116-107, 88-81 BCE)\*  
 Ptolemy X Alexander I (107-88 BCE)  
 Claudius (41-54 CE)\*\*  
 Domitian (81-96 CE)\*\*  
 Hadrian (117-138 CE)\*\*  
 Antoninus Pius (138-161 CE)
- Medinet Madi  
 Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285-246 BCE)
- Memphis  
 Ptolemy IV Philopator (221-205 BCE)  
 Ptolemy V Epiphanes (c. 193-176 BCE)
- Nadura  
 Antoninus Pius (138-161 CE)
- Nag' el-Hagar  
 Vespasian (69-79 CE)
- Naucratis  
 Ptolemy I Soter (306-282 BCE)  
 Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285-246 BCE)
- Per-khefet  
 Ptolemy I Soter (306-282 BCE)
- Philae  
 Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285-246 BCE)  
 Ptolemy III Euergetes I (246-221 BCE)  
 Ptolemy IV Philopator (221-205 BCE)  
 Ptolemy V Epiphanes (c. 193-176 BCE)  
 Ptolemy VI Philometor (180-164, 163-145 BCE)  
 Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II (170-163, 145-116 BCE)  
 Ptolemy XII Neos Dionysos (80-58, 55-51 BCE)  
 Augustus (30 BCE-14 CE)  
 Tiberius (14-37 CE)  
 Claudius (41-54 CE)
- Pithom  
 Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285-246 BCE)
- Qasr 'Ain el-Zaiyan  
 Antoninus Pius (138-161 CE)
- Qasr el-'Aguz  
 Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II (170-163, 145-116 BCE)
- Qasr el-Dush  
 Domitian (81-96 CE)  
 Trajan (98-117 CE)  
 (nearby) Antoninus Pius (138-161 CE)
- Qasr el-Ghueda (el-Kharga Oasis)  
 Ptolemy III Euergetes I (246-221 BCE)  
 Ptolemy IV Philopator (221-205 BCE)\*
- Qertassi  
 Augustus (30 BCE-14 CE)
- Qus  
 Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285-246 BCE)  
 Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II (170-163, 145-116 BCE)  
 Ptolemy IX Soter II (116-107, 88-81 BCE)\*

- Ptolemy X Alexander I (107-88 BCE)
- Saqqara  
Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285-246 BCE)\*
- Sebennytos  
Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285-246 BCE)
- Shanhur  
Augustus (30 BCE-14 CE)  
Trajan (98-117 CE)
- Sharuna  
Ptolemy I Soter (306-282 BCE)
- Tahta  
Commodus (180-192 CE)  
Maximinus Daia (305-13 CE)\*\*\*
- Taffeh  
Augustus (30 BCE-14 CE)
- Tanis  
Ptolemy I Soter (306-282 BCE)  
Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285-246 BCE)  
Ptolemy IV Philopator (221-205 BCE)  
Ptolemy VI Philometor (180-164, 163-145 BCE)
- Taposiris Magna  
Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II (170-163, 145-116 BCE)
- Tarraneh (Therenutis)  
Ptolemy I Soter (306-282 BCE)
- Tebtynis  
Ptolemy I Soter (306-282 BCE)
- Theadelphia  
Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285-246 BCE)
- Tuna el-Gebel (near Hermopolis\*)  
Ptolemy I Soter (306-282 BCE)  
Nero (54-68 CE)
- Xois  
Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II (170-163, 145-116 BCE)\*