

The Dead as a Guest at Table? Continuity and Change in the Egyptian Cult of the Dead

Barbara Borg

In his epic poem *Punica* (13.475) Silius Italicus describes the visit of Scipio Africanus to the underworld. There Scipio meets the ghost of Appius Claudius, who was fatally wounded near Capua. Appius laments that he could not find peace because his friends had failed to cremate and bury his body. Scipio wishes to do him this favour but claims that he does not know according to which rites it should be done, so he lists a number of different practices: 'All over the world the practice is different in this matter, and unlikeness of opinion produces various ways of burying the dead and disposing of their ashes. In the land of Spain, we are told (it is an ancient custom) the bodies of the dead are devoured by loathly vultures. When a king dies in Hyrcania, it is the rule to let dogs have access to the corpse. The Egyptians enclose their dead, standing in an upright position, in a coffin of stone, and worship it; and they admit a bloodless spectre to their banquets.'¹ The text goes on like this but we will stop here because our interest today is directed at the Egyptian practice.

We find confirmation for this in Lucian's *De luctu* (21): 'Up to that point, the wailing, the same stupid custom prevails everywhere; but in what follows, the burial, they have apportioned out among themselves, nation by nation, the different modes. The Greek burns, the Persian buries, the Indian encases in glass, the Scythian eats, the Egyptian salts. And the latter – I have seen whereof I speak – after drying the dead man makes him his guest at table!'²

These reports by two authors of the first and second centuries AD strike a modern reader as being fairly strange. One would expect them to have instantaneously provoked scientific curiosity. Surprisingly, this is not the case, and these passages have aroused little or no interest. It is, however, not the place here to examine the reasons for this awkward silence within the academic community.³

First of all, one should notice that there can be little doubt as to the veracity of these statements. Teles, Diodorus, Cicero and Sextus Empiricus confirm that the Egyptians kept the mummies of their relatives at home.⁴ To be sure, some of the texts show great similarity and therefore may depend on each other or on still another common source.⁵ But at least two authors knew Egypt personally. Diodorus visited Alexandria during the 180th Olympiad (60–56 BC) – moreover, R. Merkelbach recently confirmed the general reliability of paragraphs I 91–93 by comparing Diodorus' description of the judgement-ceremonial with evidence from the papyri⁶ – while Lucian spent

several years in Egypt, where he held a high position in the office of the prefect of Egypt. For the most intriguing part in the passage quoted above, the participation of mummies at banquets, he even stresses his testimony as an eyewitness.

In some of the texts the Egyptians and their strange habits clearly function as 'the other' of Greeks or Romans.⁷ Nevertheless, this does not necessarily indicate that the habits used in this way were simply invented for the purpose. In the case of Egypt, particularly, there existed enough bizarre practices to serve these needs, and this applies not only to mummification itself. Animal worship, for example, proved to be a major argument in the mostly unfavourable conceptions of Egypt, as propagated by non-Egyptian authors. However, it was also an actual and widespread practice in Graeco-Roman Egyptian popular religion.⁸

We find further evidence in Christian texts which relate that even the Coptic Christians used to keep the preserved and adorned bodies of venerated persons, predominantly martyrs, above ground. According to Athanasius this custom drove St Anthony into the desert to await his death in solitude.⁹ It was this custom again (and not mummification itself) that provoked the censure of bishops and other higher clergy – an idle censure, as it turned out, as is shown not least by the display and worship of relics up to the present day. It can hardly be imagined that the Copts 'invented' the habit themselves, but it is plausible to presume that they adopted it from their pagan predecessors.¹⁰

Support for our hypothesis can be found in the mummies themselves: Flinders Petrie reports that several of the mummies he excavated at Hawara 'had been much injured by exposure during a long period before burial'. The 'mummies had often been knocked about, the stucco chipped off'. They were 'dirtied, fly-marked, caked with dust which was bound on by rain'. On the footcases of the mummies 'the wrapping had been used by children, who scribbled caricatures upon it.' Petrie already connected his observations with the tradition that the dead were kept in the houses of their relatives and also assumed a domestic cult for them.¹¹

The passage in Herodotus which Petrie and others succeeding him drew upon cannot, however, serve as proof. Herodotus reports (2.78) that at banquets people in Egypt used to show around a well-made and nicely painted νεκρὸν ξύλινον to remind the participants of the transitoriness of life and to encourage them to enjoy the advantages of the present. There are two main reasons why this cannot possibly have anything to do

with the custom we are considering here. First of all, it appears highly unlikely that νεκρὸν ξύλινον could ever be translated as mummy. The expression must refer to some sort of wooden figure of a dead person or even of death itself – one to two ells long, according to Herodotus. It may well be a wooden skeleton, as is indicated by banquet equipment with representations of skeletons.¹² Secondly, the sense of the procedure described by Herodotus is contrary to the whole meaning connected with a mummy, especially one of a relative.¹³ The mummy was a symbol of and guarantor not for death but for life, even though for an other-worldly one.

Lorelei Corcoran recently referred to a narrative by Xenophon of Ephesos.¹⁴ He tells the story of a Lakedaimonian fisherman named Aigialeus who preserved the dead body of his wife 'in an Egyptian way' to have her around a little longer, to talk to her, eat and sleep with her and so on. Corcoran suggests that the Egyptian custom of keeping the mummies of relatives at home originated in a similar attitude towards the deceased. But is this probable? First, the context indicates that the body was not wrapped in linen, as all the contemporary Egyptian mummies were, but that the physiognomy of the deceased was still visible, so that Abrokomes could, for example, recognise the old age of Thelxione. Secondly, according to the somewhat grotesque story by Xenophon, the preservation of the woman's body was by no means religiously motivated but was the desperate attempt of a Greek (!) widower to prolong the happy days of his marriage beyond the death of his wife.¹⁵ The fact that fishermen salt fish for preservation, and that the Egyptian techniques of mummification are somewhat similar (remember that the Greek expression for mummifying, ταριχεύω, is the same as for salting of fish) may in the eyes of author and reader have lent some plausibility to the story. To presume similarly personal sentiments as the motive that gave rise to the Egyptian custom would imply that the individuals concerned had no serious relation to either the religious background for mummification or the sacred scenes depicted on the mummified bodies.

In fact, the assumption that the period of Greek and, especially, Roman occupation was one of increasing decadence, when the religious content of both rituals and depictions was no longer understood and had degenerated to a mere formality adopted comparatively meaninglessly and incoherently, was and still is quite common. But this opinion seems to have been modified in the last few years – not least by Lorelei Corcoran herself. Studies of a growing number of genres have shown that even in imperial times, scenes not only served decorative purposes but originated in meaningful concepts designed by priests and embodied in the tradition of old Egyptian beliefs. They were only modified: on the one hand supplemented by new ideas, on the other hand reduced to a smaller selection of subjects that conformed best with the needs of the

faithful.¹⁶ Likewise, I have shown elsewhere¹⁷ that the scenes and symbols on the bodies of portrait mummies were selected purposefully and represent for the most part a small range of principal ideas. Additionally, it could be shown that the impression of eclecticism that comes to most people's minds when seeing the portrait mummies is deceptive. Sketches in Egyptian style on the panels,¹⁸ realistic representations of bodies on the mummy,¹⁹ and certain attributes make it clear that 'Greek' and 'Egyptian' elements are not strictly confined to a certain part of the mummy. The separation of painting and body appears so natural only to our eyes, trained on modern museum conditions.²⁰

According to these considerations – to which Lorelei Corcoran seems to agree in principle – the behaviour of the fisherman in Xenophon cannot be connected with the Egyptian custom, which derived from religious and social needs.

This takes us back to the ancient texts mentioned above and to the observations by Flinders Petrie on the gilded masks and portrait mummies. As these seem to be the only material evidence for the habit of keeping mummies in the houses, they well deserve a closer examination.

I would like to start with a short look at the social background of the persons depicted. Surprisingly enough, written references to portrait mummies are not known.²¹ A combined study of both the mummies and the uniquely detailed information about Roman Fayum society as provided by the papyri nevertheless allows us to draw a rough picture of the social group represented here.²² These people doubtlessly belonged to the local élite, consisting of land owners, high-ranking local officials and veterans of the Roman army. Very probably, some of these were also Roman citizens with all the privileges that were connected with that status. On one portrait that has recently been excavated at Thebes we find a *naukleros*.²³ Some children wear a hairstyle that is typical for those who are going to celebrate the *mallokeuria*, a rite of passage restricted to οἱ ἀπὸ γυμνασίου.²⁴ All in all, they were members of the rich local upper class. In imperial times this élite was ethnically mixed. This is demonstrated not only by papyrological evidence like, for example, the *epikrisis*-lists, but also by the different names on mummy portraits, which do not allow any conclusions about the ethnicity of the depicted.²⁵ The necropoleis from which the portraits come mainly belong to garrison towns or towns and villages that were founded or newly founded by the Greeks or Romans and that were cultural melting pots in particular. Greeks and Romans left their traces predominantly on administration and social organisation, but also on the outer appearance of this class, who largely resemble the other inhabitants of the eastern Roman provinces as they appear to us in the form of statues, busts and reliefs. Remarkable only is the absence of typically Roman attributes. The Egyptian influence is especially strong in religious matters, even in the beliefs about death and

life after death, a field that is usually least susceptible to new ideas. As early as the second century BC Greeks began to have their dead mummified.

At first these mummies looked much the same as the ordinary Egyptian ones. Only after the beginning of Roman rule did painted portraits gradually – and only at certain places and among a small social group – replace the old Egyptian masks that were meant as an image of the deceased but carried ideal features. By adopting the veristic portrait the mummy was individualised (Pl. 45, 3).

This, however, is only the formal aspect. The function and meaning of portraits differ greatly among Romans and Egyptians. The portraits of the Romans – including their sepulchral portraits – were neither cult objects nor something necessary for a life to come. They contributed rather to the survival of the deceased in the memory of their social surroundings. They were a means of creating identity and of enabling self-representation of the deceased – who often enjoined by will the erection of images – and of his family. The portrait was never identified with the person depicted but was always understood as a representation. Its purpose was to keep awake in his own family the memory of the ancestors whose *mos* and example stood before the eyes of the descendants, and also in the wider entourage that could by viewing them recognise the importance of the family.

In contrast to this the Egyptian mummy was *de facto* as well as symbolically the deceased himself. The mask was his image as Osiris NN and was therefore provided with his ideal, that is divine, features.²⁶ Like the god Osiris and in as close an assimilation to him as possible, the deceased wished to overcome death and to gain eternal life beyond. Both mummification and the divine appearance of the mummy contributed in a magical way to the protection of the dead on their dangerous way into the other world.²⁷ The always-identical outer appearance of the mummy does not originate in a possible lack of imagination on the part of the ancient Egyptians, waiting, as it were, only for the Greeks and Romans to release them from this state. Rather, this outer appearance as a repetition of the appearance of an Osiris was an integral part of the hope for an afterlife and of the magic ceremonial.

Now the mask with the divine face of Osiris was replaced by a human, individual portrait. Furthermore, in some cases the whole body of the deceased was depicted,²⁸ permitting its ordinary earthly appearance to dominate the holy features of the mummy. According to the Egyptian religious concept this must have diminished the magic powers of the Osirian form – a serious encroachment that invites the question: for which new value might they have replaced the old one?

This marked change appears even more astonishing when we consider the mode of burial at Hawara as we know it from Petrie and some scattered notes.²⁹ The majority of the mummies were not buried carefully in

proper tombs, but in many instances were placed in plain pits in the desert sands without grave goods. And this was done none too gently: when the pit turned out to be too small the mummy was crammed into it even if it broke or otherwise suffered. Sometimes, the shafts of old chamber tombs were re-used and the mummies were squeezed in in an upright position or head first. Moreover, after the pit was refilled with sand the place could never be traced again because no marker, however inconspicuous, was placed above ground. Death rituals that were common in all religions relevant to our context cannot have taken place here. Considering these circumstances one could perhaps have explained the costly decoration of a mummy in the Egyptian style by pointing to the above-mentioned magic powers associated with it. Yet, the transformation into a much more human appearance now becomes totally unintelligible, since this deprived the deceased of some of these magic forces. Only if Petrie was right, and the mummies that were later on treated so badly stood first in the house of their relatives and received some kind of domestic cult, can these circumstances be explained.³⁰

What, then, was the origin of that custom? Neither in Greek nor in Roman religion is there any indication of a domestic cult of the dead. Likewise, in pharaonic Egypt the dead were not kept in the house of the relatives but, after embalming, were accompanied in a ceremonial procession to the tomb, where they were buried and received sacrifices. Later on they were commemorated on various days. The family offered sacrifices at the tomb and apparently also invited guests to a solemn banquet that took place in special rooms of the temple.³¹

However, for some time now, an increasing number of references have indicated that there already existed in pharaonic times a cult for the deceased in the house of the relatives. R. J. Demarée³² published a group of stelae, the so-called akh-iker stelae, mainly from Deir el-Medina, but some from other places as well, that all belong to the 18th–20th dynasties (Pl. 26, 1). According to their inscriptions they were dedicated to the departed by family (fathers, sons, brothers) or, in some cases, by admirers who did not belong to the family. These stelae were a place in which to face the dead and to sacrifice to those whose spirits were on the one hand feared and therefore had to be appeased but from whom, on the other hand, intercession and other advantages were also expected. Some offering-tables and libation-basins must, according to their inscriptions, have served the same purpose. Remarkably enough, these Deir el-Medina stelae, tables and basins have all been found in the living quarters of the town. They stood in votive chapels, in the streets and public places, but also in wall recesses in the houses.

The existence of such a domestic cult of the dead is confirmed by the ‘calendar of lucky and unlucky days’ that most probably belongs to the 19th dynasty and which prescribes domestic offerings to the dead.³³

Finally, a group of life-size to half-life-size anthropomorphic busts probably belongs to a domestic ancestral cult or cult of the dead (Pl. 26, 2). Only rarely do they bear inscriptions but they are now almost unanimously regarded as images of deceased persons.³⁴ Most of them again come from Deir el-Medina where they were displayed mainly in houses – presumably in the first reception hall – and, more rarely, in public chapels. Others are from different sites and show slight iconographic alterations. Their adoration is shown on two reliefs (Fig. 1).³⁵

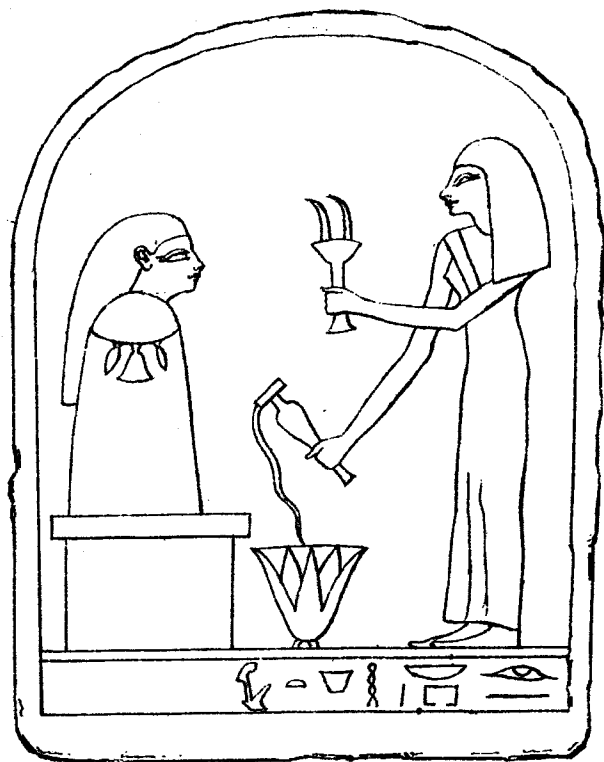


Fig. 1. Drawing of stela from Abydos, showing worship of an ancestral bust (after Mariette).

In conclusion, then, there are several clear indications of a domestic ancestral cult already in place in pharaonic Egypt, a cult that could be celebrated even in front of images of the deceased!³⁶ Such cults seem to have been the exception rather than the rule, and up to now there is no chronological series into the Greek and Roman periods. There may be two main reasons for this. First, excavations of living quarters that could provide further data are still rather scarce and, secondly, we face a problem of visibility – or lack of attention to less clearly visible material. Ancestral cult was mainly part of the popular religion, the beliefs among the middle and lower classes,³⁷ whereas the material evidence that usually catches the attention of archaeologists and Egyptologists gives information only about the uppermost class and its ideology. One reason for the

fact that most of the evidence for ancestral cult comes from Deir el-Medina may be the very ability of the craftsmen living there to manifest their beliefs in a more 'visible' form. Thus, in spite of the lack of contemporary evidence, the later custom of keeping the mummies of the deceased in the house can only be derived from the Egyptian ancestral cult.

In certain contracts, fixed days were sometimes determined for ceremonies for the dead, but additions containing the general formulation 'and on any festive occasions' or the like suggest that there were no common specific days for the dead. They could rather be commemorated on any festival.³⁸ It must remain a matter of speculation as to what form a domestic cult for the mummy might have taken, while new papyrological or material evidence is not available. Possibly the sacrifices for the mummies were performed in the traditional manner in front of the *akh-iker* stelae, tables, basins or busts, but Silius Italicus and Lucian also allow for the conclusion that the mere presence of the mummies at banquets held on the occasion of those festivals implied the participation of the deceased in it, and thus replaced a proper sacrifice.

Festivals, and banquets in particular, played a major role in Egyptian practices surrounding death for a long time. In our context, the representations of banquets for the dead in New Kingdom tombs may be interesting.³⁹ The early representations are dominated by many registers of guests. Their great number emphasises the splendour of the feast, whereas the stereotyped setting gives the depiction a rather ritual character. Later on the owner of the tomb 'moves' more and more into the centre, displayed together with his wife in front of an offering-table or a small stand, facing smaller groups of guests on the other side of it. The latter are shown far more vividly and can also consist of mixed couples. The originally stiff and ceremonial scene becomes a lively depiction of a banquet where the deceased is integrated into the community of the participants and enjoys the amenities of the festival.

Now, when during the Greek and Roman periods mummies are present at the banquets in the house of their relatives, the deceased is regarded not just as a pictorial representation substituting for reality but as actually present. His human appearance, with the realistic portrait and sometimes the whole body depicted on the lower part of the mummy, corresponds perfectly to his character as a participant in the festival.

The significance of the step from venerating the dead in the presence of substitutes like stelae or busts, or from the depiction of banquets for the dead, to the factual, physical attendance of the deceased in the form of his mummy, cannot be overestimated, and it would be most interesting to know when it was made and under what circumstances. It was no later than the third century BC, as we know from Teles, but it may have been even earlier. Once the practice was introduced, the new form of the portrait mummy must

have fulfilled the requirements of the cult as well as the demand for representation particularly well.

Up to now we have focused essentially on the religious aspects of the changes caused by the adoption of the veristic Roman portrait into Egyptian cult practice, but there is another aspect. As we noticed above, the change from an idealised divine appearance to a naturalistic one resulted in an individualisation of the mummy. Now, individualism was not only a Roman but also an old Egyptian principle within the beliefs surrounding death, providing continuity of the individual both in eternal life and in collective memory.⁴⁰ The old Egyptian portrait sculpture already showed phases of veristic representations that alternated with generalising and idealising ones. Characteristically, a new dimension of verism was reached the moment that the images no longer stood in the locked chamber of the *serdab*, sealed off from any extraneous glance, but were erected in public places, the temples, where they were accessible at least on certain occasions to a limited number of people: here they also served a representative and commemorative purpose directed towards the community of the living.⁴¹

In the Greek and particularly in the Roman periods this verism increased dramatically. This is true both for sculptures, the purpose of which cannot in most cases be determined due to missing contexts, as well as for the mummies considered here. The outer appearance of these mummies with their new retrospective, worldly and individual characteristics must be seen in connection with their presence at a place that was far more accessible than an old Egyptian temple. The mummies therefore seem to fulfil an urge for representation granted by both the individualistic depiction and the luxurious decoration.

In this connection we may reconsider an observation by B.V. Bothmer. He noticed that the production of mummy portraits begins at approximately the same time as the genre of private statues in the temples comes to an end.⁴² We do not know why these statues do not occur any more, and the chronological coincidence cannot be explained either. K. Parlasca suggested that the statues might have been replaced by painted portraits,⁴³ but it may well be that the erection of private images in the temples was prohibited from some time in the early imperial period onwards, or it may just have gone out of use for some unknown reason. The function of these temple statues was more or less the same as that of grave statues,⁴⁴ and from the New Kingdom onwards their character became increasingly representative. After this genre of private temple statues ceased to exist, therefore, and after the opportunity to erect private images in the temples may anyway have been restricted, this function may have shifted to the private and sepulchral sphere.

Here the outer, aesthetic similarity of the mummy portraits to both the ancestors' portraits and honorary images of the Romans meets with a similarity in meaning: like the latter, they now had a retroactive

effect upon society. They became a medium for representation of both the individual and his family. To what degree ancestors in Roman Egypt had a normative bearing, as they had in Rome itself, has to be examined by more competent scholars and on the basis of a wider range of material. In pharaonic Egypt the cult of the dead that granted the afterlife was a central constituent of daily life, whereas the ancestral cult did not play a major role. In Rome apparently it was the other way round. The actual cult of the dead that served the souls in the other world was of minor importance compared to the rites concerning the ancestors. The hope for an individual afterlife was looked upon rather sceptically. Survival as an individual existed only in the memory of the descendants and of society. Thus sepulchral rites have a predominantly commemorative character. Ancestral portraits carried around in funeral processions guaranteed this survival in memory as well as any display of portraits in the public or private sphere.⁴⁵ At the same time they also served the descendants as a focus for creating identity both within the family and within society. Thus their function was a topical one.

Accordingly, the adoption of the Roman portrait into the Egyptian cult of the dead is at the same time a product and a cause of a shift in the emphasis between the cult of the dead and ancestor worship of the latter. The deceased and his afterlife are no longer the dominant central issue of the ritual practice but take on, and were probably meant to take on, a major role in shaping social relationships. To be sure, this habit could by no means have been prevalent. Not only was it restricted to a very small, élite group of society, but also these families will hardly have treated all their departed in the same way.⁴⁶ This is indicated not least by the limited space available in the house. We should presume rather that only a minority of the family's deceased were honoured in this way – for reasons we do not know.

Whatever the religious beliefs and social implications in connection with the display and veneration of portrait mummies may have been precisely, the fact that mummies were kept in the house for some time, and most probably received some sort of cult there, helps to explain the discrepancy between the character of the mummies – costly but weakened in their magic powers by their new worldly shape – and their careless, sometimes even rude burial without any grave markers. The Egyptian ancestral cult rarely goes back more than one or two generations, as is shown not least by the inscriptions on the *akh-iker* stelae.⁴⁷ This leads to the assumption that the portrait mummies were kept in the house for approximately the same time. After the immediate relatives had died themselves, and after interest in the more distant ancestors had faded, the mummies may have been handed over to the temple in charge. As is shown by the different contexts, the kind of burial they were given depended on many factors that can only be identified on the basis of new evidence and extensive research.⁴⁸ In the case of the careless

burials mentioned above, a proper family tomb was obviously not available. Perhaps the relatives were not interested any more in an expensive burial and entrusted the mummies of their ancestors to the priests or servants of the temple who, away from the control of the family, cared as little for the burial as they often did before for the treatment of the bodies during embalming.⁴⁹

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Notes

1. *Aegyptia tellus claudit odorato post funus stantia saxo corpora et a mensis exanguem haud separat umbram*. Translation by J.D. Duff, Loeb edition vol. II (Cambridge, MA/London, 1961).

2. ταριχεύει δὲ ὁ Αἰγύπτιος. οὗτος μὲν γε – λέγω δὲ ἰδῶν – ξηράνα τὸν νεκρὸν σύνδειπνον καὶ συμπότην ἐποίησατο. Translation by A. M. Harmon, Loeb edition vol. IV (Cambridge, MA / London, 1961).

3. Another manifestation of this lack of interest is the fact that many editors and commentators trace back the statements of these two authors and some others quoted below (note 4) to Herodotus 2.78, which, as will soon be shown in more detail, has nothing to do with these references. The most outstanding case is H. Rupprecht's translation of 'exanguem . . . umbram' as 'Skelett' (skeleton) (Titus Catius Silius Italicus. *Punica, das Epos vom zweiten Punischen Krieg*, II (Mitterfels, 1991), 120, note 476; 121).

4. Teles, ed. Hense, 31, 9–10; 32, 1: καὶ ἡμεῖς μὲν καὶ ἰδεῖν καὶ ἄψασθαι ὀκνοῦμεν οἱ δὲ σκελετεύσαντες ἔνδον ἔχουσιν ὡς καλόν τι καὶ ἐνέχυρα τοὺς νεκροὺς λαμβάνουσιν.

Diodorus 1.92.6: τὸ δὲ σῶμα τιθέασιν οἱ μὲν ἰδίους ἔχοντες τάφους ἐν ταῖς ἀποδεδειγμέναις θήκαις, οἷς δ' οὐχ ὑπάρχουσι τάφων κτήσεις, καινὸν δικημὰ ποιοῦσι κατὰ τὴν ἰδίαν δικίαν, καὶ πρὸς τὸν ἀσφαλέστατον τῶν τοίχων ὀρθὴν ἰσθᾶσι τὴν λάρνακα. According to Diodorus, the habit of keeping the dead in the house is restricted to those families that do not possess a private sepulchre. If this is true it does not imply that the habit applies to poor people: mummification and the material used for it was available only for the wealthy anyway.

Cicero, *Tusc.* 1.108: 'Condiunt Aegyptii mortuos et eos servant domi . . .'

Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrrh. hyp.* 3.226: Αἰγύπτιοι δὲ τὰ ἔντερα ἐξελόντες ταριχεύουσιν αὐτοὺς καὶ σὺν ἑαυτοῖς ὑπὲρ γῆς ἔχουσιν.

5. Cf. the lists of funerary practices in Cicero, Silius Italicus, Lucian and Sextus Empiricus. Cicero (note 4 above) refers to

Chrysippus, who, he says, has collected these and even more abnormal customs among the peoples of the world.

6. R. Merkelbach, 'Diodor über das Totengericht der Ägypter', *ZÄS* 120 (1993), 71–84.

7. This is certainly true for Silius Italicus (or whoever inserted the relevant passage, if it was not Silius Italicus himself, as some critics suggest), Teles (who may draw from Bion), Cicero and Sextus Empiricus.

8. For a general survey of the subject see K.A.D. Smelik and E.A. Hemelrijk, "'Who knows not what monsters demented Egypt worships?'" Opinions on Egyptian animal worship in antiquity as part of the ancient conception of Egypt', *ANRW* II 17.4 (Berlin/New York, 1984), 1852–2000.

9. Athanasius, *Ant.* 90–91; Ch. Mohrmann (ed.), *Vite dei Santi I: Vita di Antonio* (Milan, 1974) 169–73; 266 (comment).

10. C. Schmidt, 'Ein altchristliches Mumienetikett, nebst Bemerkungen über das Begräbniswesen der Kopten', *ZÄS* 32 (1894), 52–62; Th. Baumeister, 'Vorchristliche Bestattungssitten und die Entstehung des Märtyrerkultes in Ägypten', *RömQSch* 69 (1974), 1–6.

11. W.M.F. Petrie, *Roman Portraits and Memphis (IV)* (London, 1911), 2.

12. For the present cf. C. Nauerth, *Vom Tod zum Leben. Die christlichen Totenerweckungen in der spätantiken Kunst*. Göttinger Orientforschungen II, 1 (Wiesbaden, 1980), 117–25. A.B. Lloyd in his commentary on Herodotus (*Herodotus, Book II, Commentary 1–98* (Leiden, 1976), 335–7) mentions some small figures from Egypt that are also skeletons or dried bodies (but no mummies – so it remains obscure why even Lloyd suggests that Lucian, *De luctu*, 21 might belong in this context).

13. On the meaning of this procedure cf. Plut. *Is.* 17 = mor. 357 F and Sept. *Sap. Conv.* 2 = mor. 148 A–B. On the *memento mori* or *carpe diem* cf. e.g. G. Wöhrle, 'Eine sehr hübsche Mahn-Mumie . . .' Zur Rezeption eines herodoteischen Motivs, *Hermes* 118 (1990), 292–301.

14. Abrokomes and Anthia V 1, 4–11. L. Corcoran, 'A Cult Function for the so-called Faiyum Mummy Portraits?', in J. H. Johnson (ed.), *Life in a Multi-Cultural Society: Egypt from Cambyses to Constantine and Beyond*, SAOC 51 (Chicago, 1992), 60.

15. Cf. the lamentations of Admetos in Euripides' *Alkestis* (348–52), who intends to have an artist make an image of Alkestis to lie in his bed and drive away his loneliness.

16. See e.g. D. Kurth, *Der Sarg der Theüris* (Mainz, 1990); D. Kurth, 'Die Friese innerhalb der Tempeldekoration griechisch-römischer Zeit', in M. Minas and J. Zeidler (eds), *Aspekte spätägyptischer Kultur. Festschrift für Erich Winter zum 65. Geburtstag*, Aegyptiaca Treverensia 7 (Mainz, 1994), 191–201; L. Corcoran, *Portrait Mummies from Roman Egypt (I–IV Centuries AD)*, SAOC 56 (Chicago, 1996).

17. B. Borg, *Mumienporträts – Chronologie und kultureller Kontext* (in press), Ch. 6.

18. Cf. Warsaw, National Museum, inv. 127191 = K. Parlasca, *Repertorio d'Arte dell'Egitto Greco-Romano*, Series B, vol. I (Palermo, 1969), 35–6 no. 35, pl. 10, 1 (subsequent quotations from this and the following two volumes II and III (Rome,

- 1977 and 1980), which also provide a good bibliography, are abbreviated as Rep. x.); Stuttgart, Württembergisches Landesmuseum, inv. 7.4 = Rep. 172; New York, MMA, inv. 44.2.2 = Rep. 444; Private Collection = Rep. 475.
19. Cairo, Aegypt. Mus., C.G. 33217 = Rep. 101; Cairo, Aegypt. Mus., C.G. 33218 = Rep. 127; London, BM, Dept. of Egyptian Antiquities, inv. 6715A = Rep. 413; Hildesheim, permanent loan Stiftung Niedersachsen, Hannover (Pelizaeus-Museum Hildesheim, *Die Ägyptische Sammlung* (Mainz, 1993), 106, fig. 101); Malibu, CA, J. P. Getty Museum, inv. 81.AP.42 (D. L. Thompson, *Mummy Portraits* (Malibu, 1982), 32 no. 1; colour pl. on 33; 64).
20. For more detailed discussion see Borg (note 17 above).
21. However, papyrological evidence for ritual and other practices connected with death are generally rare; for some of these see D. Montserrat, this volume.
22. I have treated this topic in more detail elsewhere (Borg, note 17 above, particularly Ch. 7), but it still remains a vast field for further multidisciplinary research.
23. J. Quaegebeur, 'Fouilles de l'Assassif 1970-1975', *CdE* 50 (1975), 37-8.
24. D. Montserrat, 'Mallokouria and Therapeuteria. Rituals of transition in a mixed society?', *BASP* 28 (1991), pp. 43-9; B. Legras, 'Mallokouria et mallocourètes. Un rite de passage dans l'Égypte romaine', *Cahiers du Centre G. Glotz. Revue d'histoire ancienne* 4 (1993), 113-27; Borg (note 17 above), Chs 6.1, 7.7.
25. Cf. R.S. Bagnall in this volume; with special reference to the mummy portraits, see Borg (note 17 above), Ch. 7.1.
26. For a summary of these ideas see e.g. M. C. Root, *Faces of Immortality: Egyptian Mummy Masks, Painted Portraits and Canopic Jars in the Kelsey Museum of Archaeology* (Ann Arbor, 1979), 5.
27. E. Hornung, 'Vom Sinn der Mumifizierung', *Die Welt des Orients* 14 (1983), 167-75.
28. Cf. note 19 above.
29. W.M.F. Petrie, *Hawara, Biahmu and Arsinoe* (London 1889), 20; Petrie (note 11 above), 23; H. Brugsch, 'Der Moeris-See und das Totdenfeld von Hawara', *15. Jahresbericht des Vereins für Erdkunde zu Metz* (1892/3), 25; R. V. Kaufmann, *Verhandlungen der Berliner Gesellschaft für Anthropologie, Ethnologie und Urgeschichte* 24 (1892), 416.
30. We might consider whether these burials could be secondary burials, as some participants in the conference suggested. To my mind at least two arguments can be raised against this. First of all, the Hawara pits were mostly single graves, and rarely contained more than two mummies. In this necropolis there is no evidence so far for cachettes containing a multitude of mummies as is typical for the earlier secondary burials. Secondly, simple pit graves are not restricted to Hawara but seem to have been (among others) a common Graeco-Roman type (cf. Achmim, necropolis A: R. Forrer, *Mein Besuch in Achmim. Reisebriefe aus Ägypten* (Strassburg, 1895), 36-9; K. P. Kulhmann, *Materialien zur Archäologie und Geschichte des Raumes von Achmim* (Mainz, 1983), 52-63, fig. 14).
31. D. Montserrat, 'The Kline of Anubis', *JEA* 78 (1992), 301-6.
32. R.J. Demarée, *The 3h ikr n R^c-Stelae. On Ancestor Worship in Ancient Egypt* (Leiden, 1983).
33. A.M. Bakir, *The Cairo Calendar No. 86637* (Cairo, 1966), 33 (Rt. XXIII 11).
34. W. Kaiser, 'Zur Büste als einer Darstellungsform ägyptischer Rundplastik', *MDAIK* 46 (1990), 269-85 with bibliography.
35. Kaiser (note 34 above), 272 nos 20-1.
36. On Egyptian ancestral cult in general, see M. Fitzenreiter, 'Zum Ahnenkult in Ägypten', *Göttinger Miszellen* 143 (1994), 51-72.
37. Cf. Fitzenreiter (note 36 above).
38. *LÄ* VI, 645-7 s.v. Totenfeste; 677-9 s.v. Totenmahl (U. Verhoeven).
39. S. Schott, 'Das schöne Fest vom Wüstental - Festbräuche einer Totenstadt', *Abhandlungen der Mainzer Akademie der Wissenschaften und Literatur* 11 (Wiesbaden, 1952); J. Assmann, 'Der schöne Tag. Sinnlichkeit und Vergänglichkeit im altägyptischen Fest', in W. Haug and R. Warning (eds), *Das Fest. Poetik und Hermeneutik* 14 (Munich, 1989), 3-28.
40. J. Assmann, *Stein und Zeit. Mensch und Gesellschaft im Alten Ägypten* (Munich, 1991), 159-161.
41. Assmann (note 40 above), 138-61.
42. B.V. Bothmer, *Egyptian Sculpture in the Late Period. Exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum 18 October 1960 - 9 January 1961* (New York, 1960), XXXIII-XXXIV; 183-4.
43. K. Parlasca, *Mumienporträts und verwandte Denkmäler* (Wiesbaden, 1966), 93-4 no. 20.
44. H. Kayser, *Die Tempelstatuen ägyptischer Privatleute im mittleren und im neuen Reich* (Heidelberg, 1936).
45. On the similar function of ancestral and honorary portraits cf. T. Hölscher, 'Die Anfänge Römischer Repräsentationskunst', *RM* 85 (1978), 315-57, particularly 324-44, who stresses the representative and political aspects.
46. We find, for example, different kinds of decoration on mummies that were discovered in what were most probably family tombs: e.g. R. Germer, H. Kischkewitz and M. Lüning, 'Das Grab der Aline und die Untersuchung der darin gefundenen Kindermumien', *AW* 24 (1993), 186-96; W.A. Daszewski, 'Marina el-Alamein 1991', *Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean III* (Warsaw, 1992), 29-39.
47. *LÄ* I (Wiesbaden, 1975), 111-12 s.v. Ahnenkult (D. Wildung); Demarée (note 32 above), 282.
48. Cf., for example, the different kinds of burials described in reports quoted above (note 46 above); Parlasca (note 43 above), 18-58; Borg (note 17 above), Ch. 9.
49. Cf. J. Filer, this volume.

