
This study, the revised version of the author's doctoral dissertation undertaken at Oxford University, covers aspects of Egyptian funerary archaeology over a period of 350 years, from the middle of the first century BC to the end of the third century AD, at a time when Egypt had adopted Greek culture in the sphere of public life and came to be under Roman rule for several hundred years. In its artistic expression, there are elements of both Egyptian heritage and Greek influence. Riggs's interest lies in exploring the interaction between traditional Egyptian iconography and distinctly Greek forms of representation. This is investigated by an analysis of funerary art, more specifically of coffins, mummy cases, masks and shrouds from various periods within the given time-frame and from various geographical regions in Egypt. The objects all display a combination of Egyptian and Greek iconographic elements.

In the past, the works of this period have been labelled crude and inferior to Greek art, a view that testifies to an understanding that Egyptian-style art is but a phase in a development over time, with Greek art as the next, more advanced stage. Scholarship also postulated that the ethnicity of craftsmen and their patrons or the craftsmen's skills or lack thereof were decisive factors for the way in which Greek forms of art were adopted. On this premise, works displaying a combination of styles tend to be dismissed as anomalous.

Riggs (R) sets out to challenge these views. Her starting point is the assumption that the goal for the individual Egyptian in the Graeco-Roman period remained the same as of old: to work towards a 'beautiful burial' in order to reach the status of the 'glorified' in the hereafter. The analysis of archaeological contexts and detailed comparisons of groups of objects and their iconographic elements lead R to an understanding of when, how and why Egyptian or Greek elements of representation were employed. She is able to show that the two fundamentally different systems of art could be and were applied as a matter of deliberate choice.

The book consists of two parts; the main part comprises the study proper, in five chapters, followed by an extensive appendix. The main part is preceded by the preface, lists of the illustrations and colour plates, the abbreviations used for the bibliographic references in the footnotes, a brief commentary on the conventions used in the book for Egyptian names in Graeco-Roman
Egypt, and, finally, a map of Roman Egypt with relevant placenames. The appendix includes the catalogue of 150 coffins, mummy cases, mummy masks and shrouds that forms the basis of the study. For each item, the catalogue lists its current location and dimensions, and provides a bibliography. Where applicable, the inscriptions are included: Greek is copied and translated, hieroglyphic text is presented in transliteration and translation, Demotic is included in translation. The catalogue is followed by a comprehensive bibliography and a register of museums where the objects are currently housed, listing their museum inventory numbers and cross-references to R's catalogue, as well as to page numbers in the study proper. The general index at the end combines modern and ancient placenames, people and deities as well as subjects, concepts, titles and iconographic elements. The appendix and the cross-references make the monograph very accessible for readers with a variety of interests wishing to glean primary sources.

In Ch. 1, Riggs introduces the problem of the appraisal of the ‘double style’ or ‘mixture of styles’ in art produced in the Graeco-Roman period. Scholars have tended to measure it either against earlier Egyptian or Classical Greek art. In these two traditions, however, the representation of the physical world follows extremely different principles: ‘the Egyptian artist was concerned to depict not what he saw, but what he knew’ (aspective art), while Greek art uses techniques of foreshortening and shadowing (perspective) to capture the appearance of the physical world in a seemingly realistic or naturalistic way. At this time in Graeco-Roman Egypt, the integration of Hellenistic culture into mainstream society had progressed so far that the ethnicity of the craftsmen or their patrons no longer determined whether Egyptian or Greek art forms were preferred. R therefore sets out to observe and compare archaeological and historical contexts, textual evidence and iconographic themes for several groups of funerary objects. For their decoration, conscious and optional selection of the Egyptian or Greek mode seems to occur; the issue is one of deliberate ‘construction of identity’ in the light of Egyptian funerary religion.

In Chs 2–4, in chronological order, R discusses groups of coffins from different geographical regions. Ch. 2 focusses on material both from El-Hibis in the Kharga Oasis and from Akhmim (Panopolis) in Middle Egypt dating to the 1st century BC and the first half of the 1st century AD. Ch. 3 deals with mummy masks from Meir in Middle Egypt from the 1st and 2nd centuries AD, and Ch. 4 analyses funerary equipment from Western Thebes in Upper Egypt dating to the end of the 3rd century AD.
The coffins from the Kharga Oasis mark the beginning of a tradition in funerary practice that systematically distinguishes the gender of the deceased by a prefix to the name, males being designated ‘Osiris’ and females ‘Hathor’, whereas in the pharaonic period both male and female strove to be ‘Osiris N’. In the art, this is reflected by men shown in mumiform and the women with attributes of goddesses such as a headaddress. The motifs that refer to the traditional funerary mythology (Osiris, the Sons of Horus, Isis and Nephthys) adhere to the Egyptian mode of representation, and even motifs that were introduced to Egypt via Greek culture, like the zodiac, are ‘translated’ into principles of Egyptian art. However, there are also examples where elements of daily life are integrated and a distinctly Greek style is adopted, as on the upper part of the coffin of Panakht where the sculpted linen cartonnage presents the deceased as a young man with Greek hairstyle and clothing.

The coffins from Akhmim (Panopolis) form a homogeneous group and the identification of the deceased along gender-lines has become very distinct. The coffins for females are sculpted in linen cartonnage in the ‘costume of the living’, displaying Hellenistic costume, hairstyles and jewellery. The characteristic feature is the contemporary dress, the ‘knotted ensemble’ of tunic and mantle, also known as the costume for Ptolemaic queens and associated with Hathor. There are two distinct groups of men’s coffins; on the one hand, the deceased is represented as a mummy with broad collar and bead-netting, and on the other he is depicted in the ‘costume of daily life’. The style of the garments is, however, neither the Greek-style himation and chiton nor a Roman toga, but rather a contemporary Egyptian costume with tight sleeves, round neck and an elaborately wrapped mantle. This means that the native Egyptian context remains dominant in funerary art, not only when representing traditional religious concepts and funerary motifs, but also in the depiction of the individuals themselves.

Shrouds and mummy masks from the 1st–2nd centuries AD are discussed in Ch. 3; they display an increased use of naturalistic portraiture known from Greek and Roman art combined with Egyptian-style representation of the deceased for the religious content. Options in the production of the funerary equipment become apparent: women could, for example, either be portrayed in an ideal form modelled on contemporary (Hellenistic) life with regard to their clothing, hair-style or jewellery, emulating elite society, or their identity could be constructed with attributes of the existence in the afterlife such as long ‘open’ hair, a broad collar and bare breast(s). With the example of the mummy masks from Meir, R is able to show that a classification as Egyptian or contemporary (Roman) on the basis of hair-styles is too simplistic, as all
the masks include hieroglyphic and/or Greek inscriptions, Greek personal names as well as religious motifs in traditional Egyptian mode. The pattern that becomes apparent is that contemporary dress and naturalistic portraiture of the deceased is reserved for representations of the individual in scenes before, or in the lead-up to, the judgement of the dead. Where the individual steps beyond death in the depictions of mythological narrative, the traditional Egyptian forms take over, as shown on the rear projections of the masks. This pattern has its parallels in tomb decoration as exemplified by tomb 21 in Tuna el Gebel, where the outer rooms are decorated following the principles of Greek art, while the inner rooms follow the Egyptian system.

The analysis of assemblages from Western Thebes dating to the early 2nd century in Ch. 4 shows that the inclusion of naturalistic portraiture is not a necessary step in the development of funerary art. The material from Thebes distinctly prefers the use of the Egyptian mode of representation. R argues that perceived archaism in Thebes can be understood as a deliberate move to counteract the cultural dominance of Greek art and the political dominance of Rome.

The concluding chapter draws on further examples to confirm that the Egyptians were conversant with the methods of Greek and Roman portraiture and had the skills to use them. But the Greek mode of representation was excluded from areas of religious art, particularly of funerary beliefs, where following the principles of Egyptian art was a purposeful choice. R's conclusion that 'the mortuary sphere [was] a forum for negotiating identities, which could be remarkably flexible' is only correct when considering the assemblages as a whole. It is remarkable that the core of the religious content, the fundamentals of the Osirian myth and the transformation of the deceased should remain so consistently Egyptian in its expression.

All the examples chosen belonged to native Egyptians in a Hellenised world under Roman rule who were followers of their traditional religion in pursuit of the 'beautiful burial'. Against the background of Riggs's findings, it would be interesting to conduct a comparative study with contemporary funerary art of other groups in society at a different intersection of the cross-cultural experience: the art of those following Greek religious customs and those of emerging Christianity.

The numerous illustrations in black and white and the 12 colour plates in the centre of the book are of very good quality. The black and white photos are placed within the chapters, which makes the book readable with minimal leafing backwards and forwards. The text is well foot-noted.
The strength of the book lies in the selection and informative description of the ancient material. This research fills a gap in the study of funerary practices in ancient Egypt in that it focusses on an important era of transition in Graeco-Roman Egypt. It is particularly stimulating as it explores the issue of inter-cultural influences in a period when native Egyptians had largely adopted a new culture into mainstream daily life. The art, however, reflects a dichotomy: a society that embraces the changes of the times and yet strongly adheres to ancient funerary traditions best expressed in ancient forms.

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*Egyptian Art in the Nicholson Museum, Sydney* is a most welcome addition to the catalogue of books on Ancient Egypt. Too frequently the collections of Egyptian objects in smaller museums are relatively unknown to the broader academic world, and the valuable information they contain often neglected in formal study. With this new publication we are provided with a detailed and learned account of the major Egyptian items in Sydney University’s Nicholson Museum, making these antiquities accessible to scholars of Egyptology. Although aimed principally at an academic readership, this new volume is written in a style that has much to interest a wider audience. The presentation is complemented by good clear photographs, some in colour, of each of the items discussed. In addition, each essay includes a comprehensive list of references directing the reader to further study.

In the introductory chapter, Karin Sowada provides a fascinating account of the foundation of the Nicholson Museum, and in particular, a glimpse into the life and times of Sir Charles Nicholson, who donated over 400 Egyptian artefacts to the collection. Here we have not only an account of the academic life of the early colonial years in Sydney, but also the background to Nicholson’s years of collecting antiquities in Egypt. The inclusion of a map showing the sites he is known to have visited in Egypt also helps the reader to identify the probable locations of many of the objects in the current