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Oedipus in Egypt

An Oedipus Cycle in Graeco-Roman Tuna al-Gebel

The necropolis of Tuna al-Gebel is best known for the early Ptolemaic-period tomb of Petosiris, priest of Thoth, but the greatest number of tombs excavated in the cemetery date to the period of Egypt's Roman rule. The painting that is the focus of this essay is only one of a number of Roman-period works found in these tombs that employs a subject drawn from Greek myth,¹ but it is perhaps the most remarkable. The painting treats scenes from the life of Oedipus, and the representation of the narrative is approached in a manner unknown elsewhere among extant works. Since its excavation in February 1934 and its subsequent publication by Paul Perdrizet,² the painting has received little attention. In 1962, after the death of her husband Karl, Phyllis Lehmann completed and published an article by Lehmann, in which the author attempts to identify one of the figures in the large frieze in the Villa of the Mysteries at Pompeii and, in which,³ he adduces figures in the Tuna al-Gebel Oedipus painting as testimony. Eight years later, Ida Baldassarre follows Lehmann's interpretation of aspects of the Tuna al-Gebel painting in her entry for *Agnoia* in the *Enciclopedia dell'arte antica, classica e orientale*.⁴ All three scholars present penetrating observations and bring provocative comparanda to bear on the Tuna al-Gebel painting, but it is nevertheless constructive to revisit this unique image. I have therefore taken the opportunity of this seventieth birthday offering to Professor Kiss to investigate the painting of Oedipus at Tuna al-Gebel and the meaning it carries in the hope of shedding further light on both the work itself and its significance within its context in a mortuary house.

During the period of Egypt's rule by Rome, Tuna al-Gebel, which assumes its name from one of the modern villages near the site, comprised the southern necropolis for the metropolis of Hermopolis Magna. In the pharaonic period Hermopolis Magna (then called *Khemenu* or *Khmun*) was the capital of the fifteenth nome of Upper Egypt – the Hare nome – and a major religious center of the deity Thoth. With the tomb of Petosiris as its focal point, it was a major pilgrimage site for both Egyptians and Greeks in antiquity.⁵

In the Ptolemaic period, Greek cavalry soldiers settled in Hermopolis Magna and dedicated a temple to King Ptolemy III Euergetes (246–222 BCE) and Queen Berenike,⁶ and

¹ A discussion of this tomb forms part of a chapter in a book that I am preparing for publication. I presented the reason I see for the use of Greek myth in this tomb and others from Tuna al-Gebel in a paper 'Death and Taxes', delivered at the conference, The World in a City, at the United Kingdom Classical Association Conference at the University of Liverpool in March 2008 [= Death and Taxes].

² P. PERDRIZET, *Maison funéraire 16*, [in:] S. GABRA, *Rapport sur les Fouilles d'Hermoupolis Ouest (Touna al-Gebel)*, Cairo 1941, pp. 97–100 [= *Maison fun.*].

³ K. LEHMANN, *Ignorance and Search in the Villa of the Mysteries*, *JRS* 52, 1962, pp. 62–68 [= *JRS* 52, 1962].

⁴ I. BALDASSARRE, s.v. 'Zetema', *EAA*, Suppl. 1 (1970), 944–945.

⁵ On the concept of pilgrimage, see: É. BERNAND, *Pèlerins dans l'Égypte grecque et romaine*, [in:] M.-M. Mactoux, E. Geny (Eds), *Mélanges Pierre Lévêque I*, Paris 1988, pp. 49–59; I. RUTHERFORD, *Downstream to the Cat-Goddess: Herodotus on Egyptian Pilgrimage*, [in:] J. Elsner, I. Rutherford (Eds), *Pilgrimage in Graeco-Roman and Early Christian Antiquity. Seeing the Gods*, Oxford 2005, pp. 131–149; for 'pilgrimage in passing', quoted by Rutherford (p. 135), see the seminal work by J. YOYOTTE, *Les pèlerinages dans l'Égypte ancienne*, [in:] *Les Pèlerinages. Sources orientales III*, Paris 1960, pp. 19–74.

⁶ Attested to by a dedicatory inscription *in honor of Ptolemy III and Berenike and of the brother gods, Ptolemy [II] and Arsinoe*, for their benevolence toward these soldiers. See: A.J.B. WACE, *Recent Ptolemaic Finds in*

the city retained a large Greek population. Its religious importance continued through the Roman period, as did its political distinction, since it had metropolitan status. Pliny (*Nat. Hist.* V, XI.61), who identifies Hermopolis as ‘the town of Mercury’, cites it among the few Egyptian cities of his time worth noting. Therefore, it is not surprising that despite the continuation of the cult of Thoth at Hermopolis Magna and the tomb of Petosiris that formed the centerpiece of its cemetery, a significant number of later tombs at Tuna al-Gebel resonate with a lineage exceedingly Greek. Among the excavated tombs originally published by Perdrizet,⁷ almost two dozen show some Greek aspect undiluted by any Egyptian element.

The tombs at Tuna al-Gebel – unusually for Graeco-Roman Egypt – are built tombs, either replicating houses or Egyptian-styled temples. With few exceptions, all house tombs that are at all well preserved limit themselves to Greek architecture and decoration. They are constructed of lightly stuccoed limestone or whitewashed mudbrick⁸ and are multi-room buildings, consisting of two or three rooms on the main floor that are usually vaulted, and they often include a second story with a suite of rooms accessible by an exterior staircase.⁹ The Oedipus painting (**Figs 1 and 2**)¹⁰ decorated the wall of a room on the upper floor of one such house tomb – House-tomb 16. Comprising a well-preserved frieze illustrating key moments in the life of Oedipus, it remains the most complete, most complex, most original, and probably the largest¹¹ Greek-style painting preserved from Tuna al-Gebel and perhaps from all Egypt. The painting is unique, not only among extant examples from Egypt, but among extant visual representations of the myth from any time and any place in antiquity. It combines the major scenes that visually identify the story of Oedipus and three personifications, two of which are rarely seen elsewhere (and, in those cases, iconographically distant from the Tuna al-Gebel representation), and a third that is unique to the Oedipus painting. The painting provides a brilliant interpretation of a myth in an image that finds few parallels for any of its components; the affinities it does find, I shall argue, carry a very different meaning from those encountered in the Tuna al-Gebel painting.

The frieze is bounded by a triple line in blue, yellow, and black delineating it as a system intended to be read as complete within itself, as if meant to be identified as a picture hung on the wall of the funerary house. It is conceived as a tripartite composition, with two

Egypt: Hermopolis Magna, *JHS* 1945, p. 109; elsewhere Wace (A.J. WACE, A.H.S. MEGAW, T.C. SKEAT, with the assistance of S. SHENOUDA, *Hermopolis Magna, Ashmunein. The Ptolemaic Sanctuary and the Basilica*, Alexandria 1959, p. 5) speculates that soldiers in Third Syrian War were given prize money by Ptolemy III, and they devoted a proportion of this money to the erection of a sanctuary in the name of the king who had so greatly enriched them. In this case, the temple would date to the beginning of the reign of Ptolemy III, thus about 240 BCE.

⁷ Perdrizet, *Maison fun.*, pp. 51–105.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

⁹ See, e.g., the tomb of Isidora (*ibid.*, p. 67); House-tomb 12, without mention of the staircase (*ibid.*, p. 90).

¹⁰ Now in the Cairo Museum as Cairo, Egyptian Museum 63609.

¹¹ It measures 2.15m long and 0.85m high.



1: Tuna el-Gebel, House 16, Oedipus painting *in situ* (after S. GABRA, Rapport sur les Fouilles d'Hermopolis Ouest (Touna el-Gebel), Cairo 1941, pl. XLVI).



2. Tuna al-Gebel, watercolor rendering of Oedipus painting (after S. GABRA and É. DRIOTON, *Peintures à fresques et scènes peintes à Hermopolis Ouest (Touana el-Gebel)*, Cairo 1954, pl. 15)

scenes from the life of Oedipus bracketing the personifications that add both texture and meaning to the composition. At the left, Oedipus confronts the sphinx, while at the right, he slays his birth-father, Laios. Between these two episodes, the personification of the Boeotian city of Thebes, reclining against a rocky outcrop that almost certainly indicates Mount Kithairon where Laios had exposed the infant Oedipus,¹² is centered in the panel; to her right and slightly in front of her lounges the male personification Zetema (Inquiry or Search) and, to her left, the female personification Agnoia (Ignorance) recoils from the murder at the right end of the panel. All the characters are designated by inscription including the sphinx and the nymph personifying Thebes, reminding us of Roger Ling's observation that mythological scenes in the Levant and Egypt necessitated inscriptions,¹³ though, in this case, the obscurity of some of the figures and the forms that they assume would have confounded even mainland Greeks. Seemingly a continuous narrative, the artist (if we accept a normal reading being left to right) chose to invert the chronological order of the two scenes from Oedipus' life: the death of Laios is at the right end of the panel and Oedipus' mastery of the sphinx's question is at the left.

Oedipus, nude but for brown calf-high boots and a reddish-brown chlamys and with the baldric of his sword sheath slung over his left shoulder, leans toward the sphinx. His left hand grasps the hilt of the sword; his right arm is raised.¹⁴ The sphinx is a Greek sphinx. Female and winged, she sits back on her haunches with her forelegs locked in a variation of the pose assumed by Greek sphinxes as she crouches on a wide rectilinear base. In most extant images of the scene – both Greek and Roman – the sphinx dominates the composition: either she is placed on a high column, pillar, or promontory, gazing down at the pitiable mortal she expects to dispatch or, if seated at the same level as Oedipus, she is usually pictured as preternaturally large.¹⁵ Yet the Tuna al-Gebel sphinx is painted as unusually small, seemingly far out of proportion to the podium on which she sits and, instead of the proud, upright pose Greek sphinxes normally assume, she draws back, so that her front paws remain extended in advance of her retreating torso. Despite the human skulls that lie about beneath her support,¹⁶ both her scale and her posture suggest she has

¹² Mount Kithairon has the double summit indicated in the painting, but it is not (and certainly was not) as barren as the rocky landscape in the painting. However, since no model can be demonstrated to underlie the composition as a whole, little reason exists to imagine that the painter was intimately aware of the configuration of the Theban landscape, so the double summit should remain Mount Kithairon's identifier.

¹³ R. LING, *Roman Painting*, Cambridge (England) and New York 1991, p. 183.

¹⁴ Slight discrepancies arise between the watercolor illustration and the photograph, but not enough to justify Phyllis Lehmann's characterization of the watercolor as 'crude' (*JRS* 52, 1962, p. 68), see, e.g., note 55 below.

¹⁵ See, e.g., illustrations in J.-M. MORET, *Oedipe, la sphinx, et les Thébains. Essai de mythologie iconographique I–II*, Rome 1984 [= *Oedipe*].

¹⁶ The skull that lies against the base that supports the sphinx is not so well defined in the published photograph and the second skull does not appear in the fragment inserted in the lacuna in the watercolor. Human skulls, however, have an occasional place in the composition, especially when the sphinx scene is incorporated into a funerary monument – see, e.g., Etruscan urns (MORET, *Oedipe* II, pl. 70.1 and 2; pl. 71.1) and a mosaic from an Ostia necropolis (*Ibid.*, pl. 84.1).

been intimidated by Oedipus: She is quite literally taken aback. For unlike the greatest number of interpretations of the scene, which show Oedipus – hand at chin – pondering the sphinx’s question, the Tuna al-Gebel artist has chosen the revelatory moment of the encounter.¹⁷ Oedipus raises his right hand and points to himself: As Lehmann notes, Oedipus has solved the riddle posed by the sphinx and indicates himself as Man.¹⁸

The setting of this third of the painting is outside the city walls of Boeotian Thebes, marked by a stone arched gateway. Perdrizet, who adduces the theater for all aspects of the representation, identifies ‘the door under or in front of which Oedipus stands as he responds to the sphinx’ as theatrical,¹⁹ but since doors and doorways are not arched, it is unlikely that his identification is correct. Lehmann,²⁰ more imaginatively, identifies the gateway as the door to the Elysian Fields but, though Lehmann’s interpretation is seductive given the funerary context of the picture, no evidence can be brought to bear to support his idea. Certainly, since the inquisition of the sphinx occurs outside the walls of Thebes, and since arches often mark the entrance to a (Roman) city, it is most plausible that a city gate is the intended meaning for the arched opening.

The central third of the composition depicts Thebe and Zetema. Zetema, seated with his legs to his left, looks back to his right, his gaze connecting him to the scene of Oedipus and the sphinx. Thebe, seated similarly with her legs to her right, gazes to her left toward the murder of Laios.

The Tuna al-Gebel painting depicts the only known example of the personification of Zetema.²¹ Greek personifications normally follow the gender of the aspect they personify: Thanatos (Death), for example, is male, whereas Agnoia and Thebe are female.²² Zetema (τὸ ζήτημα), however, is neuter, so, unless a tradition existed of which no examples remain extant, the artist was free to choose either gender for his personification. He chose male. This choice of gender might have been arbitrary or it might reflect the antithetical relationship of Zetema and Agnoia explored at the conclusion of this essay. In either case, Zetema is shown as a seated, half-draped youth, a green himation wrapped about his lower body, with his gaze directed toward Oedipus.

¹⁷ Also seen in a limited number of other Roman-period representations. See, e.g., the lost painting from the Tomb of the Nasonii (MORET, *Oedipe I*, pp. 183–184, no. 156 and II, pl. 78.2), Athens NM sarcophagus (*Ibid.*, I, p. 184, no. 159 and II, pl. 80.1), and Marseilles 1672 (sarcophagus acroterion, *Ibid.*, I, p. 186, no. 169 and II, pl. 87.1–2). In none of these images (or others like them), however, does the sphinx react to Oedipus’ response as she does in the Tuna al-Gebel painting.

¹⁸ For the interpretation of the gesture in the Tuna al-Gebel painting, see LEHMANN, *JRS* 52, 1962, p. 67. For other Roman images that replicate the gesture see, e.g., the mosaic from the Pianabella necropolis in Ostia (I. KRAUSKOPF, s.v. ‘Oidipous’, LIMC VII.1, 5, no. 32 and VII.2, pl. 8 – Second–Third century CE); the Attic sarcophagus, Athens NM 5846 (*Ibid.*, 5, no. 35 and VII.2, pl. 8 – third quarter of the Second century CE) [= LIMC VII, s.v. ‘Oidipous’].

¹⁹ PERDRIZET, *Maison fun.*, p. 100.

²⁰ LEHMANN, *JRS* 52, 1962, p. 67.

²¹ See F. CINCIANI, s.v. ‘Zetema’, LIMC VIII.1, 309 no. 1 [= ‘Zetema’].

²² Most city personifications, like Thebe, are female to accord with the gender of the Greek noun (ἡ πόλις) for city.

Lehmann identifies Zetema as assuming the pose of Narcissus, based presumably on the image best known from the Pompeian Domus Lucretii Frontonis,²³ (and sees Zetema, too, gazing at his reflection in the lacuna that remains below) and draws a connection between the two youths,²⁴ but this interpretation is impossible to sustain. First, though Zetema is a young, half-draped male relaxing languorously, his head turned back toward his supporting arm like Narcissus in the painting from Pompeii, he merely assumes the open pose that best exhibits the bodies of young, seductive males and one that is therefore employed for a number of mortal and semi-mortal mythic youths – Kyparissos, for example, who is a narrative doublet of Narcissus, known from his mention by Ovid,²⁵ Hippolytos,²⁶ Endymion,²⁷ Ganymede (who assumes a variant pose of Endymion),²⁸ and Adonis²⁹ – as well as for generic males.³⁰ Nor is the pose employed exclusively for attractive youths: it is also found for females,³¹ female deities,³² and nymphs,³³ so any meaningful iconographic connection of Zetema with Narcissus is impossible to countenance.³⁴ Second, the pose for the self-absorbed Narcissus finds a number of variations, as does that of the other characters that assume like poses,³⁵ and these variations deny any pose assuming a specific meaning. Third, the actual painting from Tuna al-Gebel (unlike the watercolor rendering of it) shows that although Zetema's head is inclined, his gaze is directed toward

²³ Pompei V 4.11 (B. RAFN, *s.v.* 'Narkissos', LIMC VI.1, 704 no. 1 and VI.2, pl. 415); for other examples see *ibid.*, VI.1, 703–711 and VI.2, pls 415–420.

²⁴ LEHMANN, *JRS* 52, 1962, p. 67. He is closely followed by BALDASSARRE, 'Zetema', 944–945).

²⁵ Ovid. *Met* 10.106–142; Pompeii VI 15, 1 (House of the Vettii); see J.-R. GISLER, *s.v.* 'Kyparissos', LIMC VI.1, 165–166, 165 no. 4, and VI.2, pl. 77.

²⁶ See, e.g., the Roman marble urn, British Museum 2382 (P. LINANT DE BELLEFOND, *s.v.* 'Hippolytos I', LIMC V.1, 449, no. 37 and V.2, pl. 319), the sarcophagus, Beirut National Museum 447 (*ibid.*, V.1, p. 448 no. 25 and V.2, pl. 318), and especially the lost painting, Pompeii VIII.4.34 (*ibid.*, V.1, 451 no. 47 and fig. on p. 451).

²⁷ E.g., Naples NM 9246, a painting from Herculaneum (H. GABELMANN, *s.v.* 'Endymion', LIMC III.1, 730 no. 19 and III.2, pl. 552) and the mosaic from Ostia's Isola Sacra, grave no. 87 (*ibid.*, III.1, 731 no. 29 and III.2, pl. 553).

²⁸ See H. SICHTERMANN, Der schlafende Ganymed, *Gymnasium* 83, 1976, pp. 534–550.

²⁹ For Adonis see J. HODSKE, Häuser und Mythenbilder in Pompeji als Spiegel der Gesellschaft, *BABesch* 85, 2010, p. 187 and p. 187, fig. 5 (Pompeii, Casa di Successus) [= Häuser u. Mythenbilder]. His focus is on the introduction of androgynous, nude youths populating Fourth-Style paintings in Pompeii.

³⁰ E.g. seated figure on the east wall of Viridium h of the Casa dei Cei at Pompeii, see D. MITCHEL, Casa dei Cei (I 6, 15), *Häuser in Pompeji* Bd. 3, Munich 1990, p. 86, and fig. 276.

³¹ E.g. Rome, National Museum, inv. 1187 from the southwest wall of the anteroom of the Villa Farnesina, see I. BRAGANTINI, M. DE VOS, Museo Nazionale Romano. Le Pitture II.1: Le Decorazioni della Villa Romana della Farnesina, Rome 1982, p. 191, and pl. 97.

³² E.g. Venus fishing, from the North wall of Room R (a cubiculum) from the Casa degli Amorini Dorati at Pompeii, cf. F. SEILER, Casa degli Amorini Dorati (VI 16, 7.38), *Häuser in Pompeji*, Bd. 5, Munich 1992, p. 57 and fig. 389.

³³ E.g. nymphs in paintings from Boscotrecase, cf. M.L. ANDERSON, Pompeian Frescoes in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, *BMetrMus*, Winter 1987/88, pp. 50 and 53 and below, in this article, note 45.

³⁴ HODSKE, Häuser u. Mythenbilder, pp. 186–187, suggests that the appearance of the Hermaphrodite in Fourth Style painting permitted the gender leap for the motif, for which he cites Aphrodite as Fisher (see above, note 32). This observation addresses the formal change of gender, but also underscores that meaning does not necessarily follow form.

³⁵ See, e.g., above, note 28.

Oedipus.³⁶ Fourth, the nymph Thebe in the Tuna al-Gebel painting is one of the nymphs that assumes the precise mirror image of the ‘Narcissus pose.’ And fifth, and most important, other figures (including, here, Thebe) also find their models in well-known works, without necessarily carrying the meaning of these figures.³⁷ And this seems to be the way models work in antiquity. A painting in a tomb in a Roman-period cemetery near Akhmim, for example, uses the same model for a ‘portrait’ of the deceased as that employed for Moses in an image of the Crossing of the Red Sea in the synagogue at Dura Europos in Syria;³⁸ and not even the greatest imaginative stretch can easily link the two characters portrayed. In the Oedipus painting, as elsewhere, model and meaning do not necessarily coincide.³⁹

To Zetema’s left sits Thebe, who assumes the mirror image of the pose of Zetema and who, framed by Mount Kithairon, marks the midpoint of the painting. Thebe is the nymph who gave her name to the city Laios ruled and in which Oedipus was born and which he was to rule after his defeat of the sphinx. Thus, whereas Search or Inquiry looks toward the sphinx, Thebe’s gaze is turned toward the encounter between her former and future king.

Topographical personifications were well established by the time of the Tuna al-Gebel painting. In literature, localities, like deities, were early given human form and, although no Xenophanes mocked their similarity to humankind, one only has to consider the Homeric Hymn to Apollo (lines 30–46) for the anthropomorphized lands that ‘trembled’ and ‘were afraid’ when Leto begged them to permit her touching down to give birth to her twins or, in the second Homeric *Hymn to Apollo* (lines 244–276), recall Telpousa, whom Apollo encountered when he sought a spot for his sanctuary. Given this literary inclination toward personification and the added impetus provided by the many Greek cities that boasted illustrious founders who themselves incorporated well-known mythical form, it is surprising that personifications of cities and other geographical features can be identified with certainty in visual form only beginning in the Early Classical period.

The Boeotian city of Thebes is among the earlier preserved visualizations of topical personifications,⁴⁰ though in no extant monument is she paired with Oedipus as she is

³⁶ The watercolor does not indicate Zetema’s irises and pupils, which are fairly clear in the original.

³⁷ Whereas one might argue a similarity between Narcissus and Kyparissos, Adonis, Ganymede, and Endymion, since all were amorously pursued by a deity, and perhaps even to Hippolytus, who also proved fatally attractive, only a stretch of the imagination (and sexual allure) would link the use of the pose to nymphs and Venus. Since the theme of sex underlies much of the narrative of myth, however, this connection appears too broad to consider practicable. A connection of a meaningful Narcissus pose to generic males and females is even a further stretch.

³⁸ See M.S. VENIT, *Referencing Isis in Tombs of Graeco Roman Egypt: Tradition and Innovation*, [*in:*] *Isis in Egypt: Egyptian Gods in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt. Proceedings of the IVth International Conference of Isis Studies*, Liège, November 27–29, 2008. Michel Malaise in honorem, 2010, L. Bricault, M.J. Versluys (Eds), [= *Referencing Isis*], p. 106, pls. 7 and 8.

³⁹ LEHMANN, *JRS* 52, 1962, p. 63, acknowledges this dichotomy while still insisting on the connection of model to meaning.

⁴⁰ See, e.g., Israel, private collection, Attic red-figured skyphos, side B (E. MANAKIDOU, *s.v.* ‘Salamis’, LIMC VII.1, 652, no. 2 (as SWISS, private collection) and C. VLASSOPOULOU, *s.v.* ‘Thebe’, LIMC VII.1, 915 (no number); A.C. SMITH, *Political Personifications in Classical Athenian Art* (Diss. Yale University, 1997), pp. 3, 48, and 281, no. VP 11: Thebe, inscribed; the personification of the Boeotian city, appears on one side of the vase, Salamis

here. At Tuna al-Gebel, she is seen in the form of a young female wearing only a light-brown himation wrapped at her hips and supporting the stem of a large bud with her right hand.⁴¹ She assumes the same pose as Zetema and that, and her half-draped form, set her apart from other representations of the personification. The depiction of Thebe in the Tuna al-Gebel painting does not find its visual model in the fully draped female figure that had early personified the city,⁴² nor in Hellenistic images of the personification,⁴³ nor in imperial images known from Boeotian coins.⁴⁴ Instead, it is based either on a much copied statue of a generic nymph,⁴⁵ or, alternatively, an image intentionally constructed as a counterpart to Zetema, to whom that nymph bears a close, though gender-bent, resemblance. In either case, like Zetema, the figure of Thebe in the Tuna al-Gebel painting takes its form from an image unconnected with the meaning it carries. And like Zetema, by inscription, she imposes her identity upon that form. As with all the personifications in the picture, the form itself does not convey the meaning.

The third personification, Agnoia, is one rarely depicted visually and one that may have surfaced relatively late. Lucian (*Columniae Non Temere Credendum* 4), writing in the Second century CE, credits Apelles (whose date is problematical) with including Agnoia in his painting *Calumny* but, in his ekphrasis, Lucian makes it clear that the figure is not labeled and that the identification is his own.⁴⁶ The earliest certain occurrence of Agnoia, then, is in a play by Menander (c. 342–291 BCE; the date of the play uncertain), as Perdrizet

on the other; c. 460 BC. Thebe also appears inscribed, denoting Thebes, in the last quarter of the Fifth century BC in the scene of Kadmos attacking the dragon (Berlin F 2634, red-figured hydria by the Kadmos Painter, *ARV* 1187, no. 33; VLASSOPOULOU, 'Thebe', LIMC VII.1, 914 no. 3, dated to the end of the Fifth century BC, and E. PARIBENI, s.v. 'Harmonia', LIMC IV.1, 413 no. 2, IV.2, pl. 239, dated 420–410 BC; see also H.A. SHAPIRO, *Personifications in Greek Art. The Representation of Abstract Concepts 600–400 BC*, Zürich 1993, p. 103, 241 no. 49, 103, fig. 56 (dated 410–400 BC); SMITH, *Political Personifications*, pp. 47 and 305, no. VP 34).

⁴¹ PERDRIZET, *Maison fun.*, p. 99, sees it as *a fan in the form of a leaf of a white water lily*; it is less fan-like and more budlike in the original painting than in the colorplate, and she is, after all, the nymph of the spring of Boeotian Thebes, where a water lily should be out of place.

⁴² See note 40, above.

⁴³ See, e.g., London, British Museum G 104, another relief skyphos on which she holds a scepter (VLASSOPOULOU, s.v. 'Thebe', LIMC VII.1, 915 no. 12 and I. KRAUSKOPF, s.v. 'Antigone', LIMC I.1, fig. on p. 821) and New York 1922.139.1, a red-figured bell krater (VLASSOPOULOU, *op. cit.*, p. 914 no. 7 and E. PARIBENI, s.v. 'Harmonia', LIMC IV.2, pl. 239).

⁴⁴ See, e.g., VLASSOPOULOU, s.v. 'Tebe', LIMC VII.1, 915 no. 18, and VII.2, pl. 620.

⁴⁵ As seen for example in a statuette, possibly from women's baths in the Piraeus (British Museum GR 1885.8-4.1 [Sculpture 1713], dated 200–100 BCE) and a larger replica, Palatine Museum inv. no. 12, as well as in the two paintings from Boscotrecase, noted above, note 33.

⁴⁶ Lucian says that the two women flanking a man with huge ears *seem to me (μοι δοκεῖ) to be Ignorance and Suspicion*. The date of Lucian's *Apelles* is problematical, however, since the historical event he mentions in connection with Apelles – a conspiracy against Ptolemy IV Philopater – occurred a full century later than the working period of the Apelles celebrated by Pliny (*Nat. Hist.* XXXV.XXXVI.79–97) as the only painter permitted to paint Alexander's portrait, and Pliny confirms that Apelles was active in the court of Ptolemy I. Antiphilos, Apelles' accuser, who provoked the painting, was also active in the fourth century. Lucian, writing long after both events, might have conflated his sources. See J.J. POLLITT, *The Art of Ancient Greece: Sources and Documents*, Cambridge (England) and New York 1990, p. 163, and D. CAST, *The Calumny of Apelles. A Study in the Humanist Tradition*, New Haven-London 1981, pp. 10–11, n. 10 for full discussion and bibliography.

points out,⁴⁷ who had the personification recite the prologue in his *Perikeiromene* ('The Girl with her Hair Cut Short'),⁴⁸ and surviving papyri that preserve texts of Menander's plays testify to the admiration of his works by Greek speakers in Egypt. Later, multiple Agnoias are met in the philosophical landscape of the 'Plaque of Kebes' (27.4), constructed probably in the First century CE.⁴⁹ Nevertheless, despite Lucian's familiarity with the personification, any lasting influence that Apelles or Menander or 'Kebes' might have had on the introduction of Agnoia seems slight, since the Tuna al-Gebel painting is one of only two certain extant visual examples of the personification, and the second, a standing frontal female figure,⁵⁰ bears no formal resemblance to the Tuna al-Gebel version, though it too is inscribed Agnoia.⁵¹

Oedipus' encounter with the sphinx is a frequent subject in funerary context, but the death of Laios, seen at the far right of the panel, is a scene rarely represented,⁵² and an extended narrative of the Oedipus tale, as seen at Tuna al-Gebel, is rarer yet. A single extant example of the death of Laios paired with Oedipus and the sphinx appears on a sarcophagus lid in the Vatican dated *c.* 220 CE.⁵³ The disposition of the two scenes parallels that of the Tuna al-Gebel painting, with the scene with the sphinx at the left, and the death of Laios (whom Oedipus wrests from his chariot to slay) at the right, but instead of depicting the personifications found in the Tuna al-Gebel painting, the central scenes on the sarcophagus lid are given over to the childhood of Oedipus.⁵⁴

In literature, the fullest version of the encounter of Oedipus with Laios is related by Apollodorus (III.V.7), who records Oedipus and Laios, each in a chariot, meeting at a narrow spot in the road. Laios' herald orders Oedipus to move aside. When Oedipus refuses, the herald kills one of Oedipus' horses. Oedipus, enraged, then dispatches both the herald and

⁴⁷ PERDRIZET, *Maison fun.*, p. 99.

⁴⁸ This observation is one of the reasons that Perdrizet credits the theater as the painting's inspiration.

⁴⁹ Cited as 23.1 by LEHMANN, *JRS* 52, 1962, p. 64. See also F. CANCELANI, *s.v.* 'Agnoia', LIMC I.1, 302. For the date, see D. PESCE, *La Tavola di Cebete: testo, traduzione, introduzione e commento di Domenico Pesce*, Brescia 1982, p. 11.

⁵⁰ The other shows a frontal female figure drawn on a papyrus found at Oxyrrynchos in Egypt (Oxford, *PapOx* 2652), CANCELANI, 'Agnoia', LIMC I.1, 302 no. 1 and I.2, pl. 221.

⁵¹ Recognizing a similarity in pose between the Tuna al-Gebel Agnoia and the winged daemon flagellating a young woman on the rear wall of the painted room in the Villa of the Mysteries near Pompeii, LEHMANN, *JRS* 52, 1962, pp. 62–68, proposes that the figure in the Villa painting is also Agnoia. With Agnoia, he also associates a figure on a mosaic from Djemila (LIMC I.1, *s.v.* 'Agnoia', p. 303, no. 5 and I.2, pl. 222) and a carved sardonix Cab. des Méd.62 and Cab. des Méd. 63 (*Ibid.* I.1, p. 303, nos. 6 and 7; I.2, pl. 222). Fulvio Canciani, who wrote the entry in LIMC I.1 on Agnoia, categorizes both as 'documenti dubbia interpretazione' (*Ibid.*, I.1., p. 303).

⁵² See O. TOUCHEFEU-MEYNIER, *s.v.* 'Laios', LIMC VI.1, 186, nos. 3–7. See also MORET, *Oedipe I*, p. 2, who notes one Greek image on a very fragmentary vase (Adria Bc 104, bell krater by Polygnotos, ARV p. 1029, no. 19 and pp. 1678–1679; MORET, *Oedipe II*, pl. 1.3), which seems to show Oedipus, having leapt down from his chariot, attacking Laios with his staff, while Kalliope watches; for the few Roman examples of the death of Laios, see MORET, *Oedipe I*, p. 127, n. 6).

⁵³ Vatican 10.408, MORET, *op. cit.* I, p. 184, no. 161 (*c.* 220 CE) and II, pl. 83; TOUCHEFEU-MEYNIER, 'Laios', 186, no. 7.

⁵⁴ MORET, *op. cit.* I, p. 127.

King Laios. As on the Vatican sarcophagus lid, the moment chosen in the few extant scenes (and, among those, in which the moment is clear enough to interpret) is the one at which Oedipus drags Laios from his chariot before he delivers the fatal blow. The Tuna al-Gebel painter, idiosyncratically, chooses a later moment. Here Laios, garbed in white chiton(?) and thick brown himation, has sunk to his knees, facing three-quarters toward the viewer. He spreads out his hands in supplication as Oedipus grabs him by the hair with one hand and, with the other, sinks his short sword into the body of his father. The outstretched legs and arms of Oedipus, his chlamys billowing behind him, and the diagonal shadow that emphasizes the thrust of his feet conspire to contrast the virile ephebe with the submissive older man. Though he positions himself as far from Laios as his short weapon permits,⁵⁵ at this horrific moment Oedipus is nevertheless to be seen as heroic. The horizontal created by Oedipus arm and the vertical line created by his sword mirror the form of the stele in front of which Laios sinks, which must represent the stele that will mark his grave.⁵⁶

The stele also connects the figure of Agnoia to the Oedipus and Laios group, since Agnoia stands directly in front of the stele as she raises her arms, recoiling from the scene.⁵⁷

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No one has satisfactorily explained the meaning of the Oedipus painting within the context of the house-tomb at Tuna al-Gebel. Perdrizet⁵⁸ takes the owner of the tomb as a Sophist who desired a moral in the decoration for his tomb, whereas Baldassarre, who faithfully follows Lehmann's description of the painting, presents a fragmented and convoluted interpretation. She argues that the painting illustrates neither the myth of Oedipus nor any play based on that myth, but instead is a philosophical-religious elucidation of the myth, in which "the search itself, the recognition itself, the *zetein*, is interrupted by the disasters of ignorance."⁵⁹ She notes that *in Neoplatonic thought of late antiquity, the story of Narcissus will become, in fact, an allegory for the search for truth carried finally to its extreme consequence.*⁶⁰ Her explanation of the painting's meaning is clearly tortuous. How Narcissus is perceived in late antiquity is irrelevant to the painting since the painting, on the one hand, does not illustrate the myth of Narcissus and, on the other, is not of late

⁵⁵ In the original painting, Oedipus' chest is drawn with greater definition and his left arm is somewhat brawnier, mitigating the flat expanse of chest seen in the colorplate.

⁵⁶ Lehmann identifies the stele as denoting a sanctuary, but the two circular protuberances near the top of the stele can also serve to indicate or carry funerary wreaths (*JRS* 52, 1962, p. 63).

⁵⁷ Lehmann (*ibid.*, p. 67) interprets Agnoia in the Tuna al-Gebel painting as urging Oedipus on as he commits patricide, but this interpretation is necessitated by the thesis of his article rather than by any value-neutral visual analysis. For the interpretation of Agnoia 'expressing extreme horror by a theatrical gesture,' see MORET, *Oedipe I*, p. 120, n. 8, who cites also G. KÖRTE, *Über Personifikationen psychologischer Affekte in der späteren Vasenmalerei*, Berlin 1874, *passim*. Moret sees the gesture as paradoxical since it is Agnoia who has precipitated the action that leads to the death of Laios.

⁵⁸ PERDRIZET, *Maison fun.*, p. 100.

⁵⁹ BALDASSARRE, 'Zetema', *EAA Suppl.* 1, 944

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 944–945.

antique date. It is unquestionably a painting of episodes in the life of Oedipus, and its meaning has to be derived with that actuality in mind.

Jean-Marc Moret disputes any philosophical similarity of Zetema to Narcissus, arguing that *the contemplative act [had], in each context, an entirely different signification*,⁶¹ and he correctly stresses the symmetrical composition as a key component to the meaning of the scene. He draws attention to the “centripetal action” of the two narrative scenes emanating from the centrality of Thebe and locates the city as the focal point of the action, but he takes this signification no further.⁶² Moret’s visual analysis is compelling, though his conclusion does not fit the context of the image: A focus on Thebes seems an unlikely reason for the scene to appear at Tuna al-Gebel. Yet if Thebe – sited beneath Mount Kithairon and acting as its identifier – is viewed metaphorically to reference the infancy of Oedipus, complementing the ephebe who has solved the riddle and the old man Laios about to meet his death, the tripartite composition can be seen to reiterate the riddle’s three stages in the life of Man. The composition then reinforces not only Oedipus’ solution to the sphinx’s puzzle, but the breadth of human life, itself appropriate to a funerary monument. It connects the painting to the only other extant monument that includes the episodes of both the sphinx and the death of Laios, the sarcophagus lid adduced above,⁶³ which has scenes from the childhood of Oedipus bridging the two events. The centrality of Thebes referencing the exposure of the infant on the slopes of Mouth Kithairon that precipitated the two flanking events, then, becomes pivotal to the meaning of the image.

Viewing Thebe as a metaphor may explain the composition of the painting, but to mine the eschatological meaning of the image, it seems fruitful to interrogate the character of Oedipus, who is after all, the subject of the work. Most recent scholars who have addressed Sophocles’ *Oedipus at Colonus* agree that in the resolution of the narrative, the playwright transforms Oedipus from an outcast into a hero.⁶⁴ The play ends, in the words of Peter J. Ahrensdorf,⁶⁵ with *the hopeful tale of the apotheosis of Oedipus*. Within his discussion, Ahrensdorf also comments upon the character of Oedipus, and his insights are worth repeating here. Arguing that Oedipus exhibits a singularly strong interest in the afterlife, he notes that Oedipus is the only character in the play (except the priests) to speak of Hades (lines 29–30) and observes that every time Oedipus does speak of the afterlife he *does so in order to reject the apparent suggestion... that there is no afterlife*.⁶⁶ Ahrensdorf identifies Oedipus as a monster-slayer in the lineage of Herakles and Perseus, but incisively notes that what differentiates Oedipus from the other monster-slayers is that his victory is intellectual.⁶⁷

⁶¹ MORET, *Oedipe I*, p. 123.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 123. His conclusion is that the symbolic recurrences of the city of Thebes shows that the myth preserves enough reality to accompany a cultivated representative of Hermopolis into the afterlife.

⁶³ Vatican 10.408 (see note 53, above).

⁶⁴ See, e.g., D. BIRGE, *The Grove of the Eumenides: Refuge and Hero Shrine in Oedipus at Colonus*, *CIJ* 80, 1984, p. 11, and the works noted in the following citations.

⁶⁵ P.J. AHRENSDORF, *Greek Tragedy and Political Philosophy. Rationalism and Religion in Sophocles’ Theban Plays*, Cambridge-New York 2009, p. 48.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

Other scholars take Oedipus as hero even more substantively. Lowell Edmunds holds that Oedipus – who had cults at Eteonos near Thebes, at Sparta, and in Attica – can be identified as a chthonic hero,⁶⁸ and, with even greater specificity, Claude Calame,⁶⁹ Andreas Markantonatos⁷⁰ and Adrian Kelly,⁷¹ connect Colonus with Eleusis, equating the death of Oedipus with that of an initiate into the cult,⁷² a connection earlier suggested by Richard Seaford for both Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus* and Aeschylus' *Oedipus*.⁷³

The visualization of the personifications of Zetema and Agnoia cannot merely have been intended to embellish the narrative scenes that flank them. Their rarity alone precludes that possibility. Moret notes that in Sophocles' *Oedipus the King* the verb 'to search' (ζητεῖν) is connected only with the murder of Laios, never with the sphinx,⁷⁴ which underscores (were further evidence necessary) that the labeled personification in the Tuna al-Gebel painting must carry more extensive significance than its relation to the untangling of the riddle. In Sophocles' *Oedipus the King* (lines 109–110), Creon says: *In this land, [Apollo] said, 'That which is sought (τὸ... ζητούμενον), is found; that which is overlooked escapes'*. This phrase, coupled with the other connections set out above, suggest that in the painting 'that which is sought' – that is, Zetema – personifies a fruitful afterlife; as Oedipus, through his intellect triumphs over the sphinx that augurs death, so the initiate achieves a similar transcendent state through knowledge accrued by initiation into the mysteries.⁷⁵ 'Ignorance,' visualized in the painting as contrapuntal to 'the search,' can also be detached from its literal meaning in the myth: In concordance with Zetema and as his counterweight, Agnoia is death without the knowledge gained through initiation into the mysteries and thus without the hope of achieving a blessed afterlife.

Which mysteries may be specifically referenced in the painting is difficult definitively to determine, since the mysteries of Isis, those of Demeter and Kore, and those of Dionysos probably all had currency in Roman-period Egypt.

⁶⁸ L. EDMUNDS, *The Cults and Legends of Oedipus*, *HarvStCIPhil* 85 (1981), 221–238; see also L. Edmunds, *Oedipus*, New York 2006, pp. 26–31.

⁶⁹ C. CALAME, *Mort héroïque et culte à mystère dans l'Oedipe à Colone de Sophocle: Actes rituels au service de la création mythique*, [*in:*] *Ansichten griechischer Rituale. Geburtstags-Symposium für Walter Burkert*, F. Graf (Ed.), Stuttgart-Leipzig 1998, pp. 349–351.

⁷⁰ A. MARKANTONATOS, *Tragic Narrative: A Narratological Study of Sophocles' Oedipus at Colonus*, Berlin 2002, pp. 198–220.

⁷¹ A. KELLY, *Sophocles: Oedipus at Colonus*, London 2009, pp. 81–82.

⁷² MARKANTONATOS, *op. cit.* p. 208

⁷³ R.A.S. SEAFORD, *Reciprocity and Ritual. Homer and Tragedy in the Developing City-State*, Oxford 1994, pp. 396–398 [= *Reciprocity and Ritual*] and *Id.*, *Sophocles and the Mysteries*, *Hermes* 122, 1994, pp. 275 and 287. His argument for the *Oedipus* by Aeschylus is based on this play being one in which Aeschylus had been accused of profaning the mysteries of Demeter (*op. cit.*, p. 398 and n. 128).

⁷⁴ MORET, *Oedipe I*, p. 122, n. 4.

⁷⁵ BALDASSARRE (EAA *Suppl.* I, 945) concludes her entry with the comment that the picture 'becomes allusive of Dionysiac initiation, as the escape from ignorance toward truth and revelation, but she provides neither background nor evidence to attach this interpretation to the Tuna al-Gebel painting. She is channeling LEHMANN, *JRS* 52, 1962, p. 66, who comes to a similar conclusion for the painting in the Villa of the Mysteries.

Though one might argue a celestial aspect to Egyptian Isis as early as the Pyramid Texts,⁷⁶ little secure epigraphic evidence for the practice of Isiac mysteries emerges from Egypt. Only two documents can be interpreted to refer to the practice, though a third found in a number of iterations and possibly a reflection of a Memphite aretalogy, may conceivably be brought to bear.⁷⁷ Architecturally, the lateral staircase of the private temple of Isis, Hermanubis, and Harpocrates from Alexandrian Ras al-Soda and a similar one from a temple to Isis in the complex at Luxor might permit a means for the epiphany of the goddess and herald mysteries performed within the naos.⁷⁸ Pictorially, evidence for the mysteries of Isis originates primarily from tombs in Alexandria, though I have also argued that tombs in the chora preserve visual evidence for Isiac mysteries as well.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ Insofar as her identity as Isis-Sothis can be assumed: PT 632 (applying K. Sethe's numbering system): *You have placed her [Isis] upon your phallus and she being ready (spdt) as Sothis (spdt)...* R.O. FAULKNER, *The King and the Star-Religion in the Pyramid Texts*, *JNES* 25.3, 1966, p. 159; see also ID., *Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, Oxford 1969, p. 120, Utterance 366, §632. See R.A. WELLS, *Sothis and the Satet Temple on Elephantine: A Direct Connection*, *SAK* 12, 1985, pp. 259 and 293, n. 7 for mention of the pun originally identified by G. ROEDER, *Sothis and Satis*, *ZÄS* 45, 1908, pp. 22–30; and also G. CLERC, *Isis-Sothis dans le monde romaine*, [in:] M.B. de Boer, T.A. Eldridge (Eds), *Hommages à Maarten J. Vermaseren I*, Leiden 1978, p. 250. J.P. ALLEN, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, Atlanta 2005, p. 81, Teti, spell 198, does not render the pun in his translation (*You have put her [Isis] on your phallus, so that your seed might emerge into her, sharp as Sothis...*), so the connection is not certain.

⁷⁷ In his magisterial study of Isis and Serapis, R. MERKELBACH, *Isis regina – Zeus Serapis. Die griechisch-ägyptische Religion nach den Quellen dargestellt*, Stuttgart and Leipzig 1995 [= *Isis regina*] lists the two possibilities, both preserved on papyri from Oxyrhynchus, The first is preserved on two papyri, P.S.I 1162 and 1290, the one dated to the First century CE, the Second to the Third century CE (*Ibid.*, pp. 170–171, §325); see also ID., *Der Eid der Isismysten*, *ZPE* 1, 1967, pp. 55–73 (and for the date, *Ibid.* p. 55). For the two documents see also M. TOTTI, *Ausgewählte Texte der Isis- und Serapis-Religion*, Hildesheim 1985, pp. 19–23, who follows Merkelbach's interpretation. For the second, see MERKELBACH, *Isis regina*, p. 171, §326 and ID., *Ein ägyptischer Priesterid*, *ZPE* 2, 1968, pp. 7–30.

An aretalogy from Kyme on the west coast of Anatolia can also be adduced if the Kyme aretalogy (and other similar ones) is, in fact, copied from an inscription at Memphis, as it self-describes in lines 1–5, because in this inscription, Isis numbers among her many accomplishments that [*she*] *revealed mysteries unto men* (l. 22). For the translation of the foregoing, see, M.W. MEYER (Ed.), *The Ancient Mysteries. A Sourcebook. Sacred Texts of the Mystery Religions of the Ancient Mediterranean World*, San Francisco 1986, pp. 172–173; see also MERKELBACH, *Isis regina*, p. 113, § 210 for previous bibliography. The ur-text of the aretalogy is dated to the Third century BCE by M. BOMMAS, *Heiligtum und Mysterium. Griechenland und seine ägyptischen Gottheiten*, *Zaberns Bildbände zur Archäologie, Sonderbände der Antiken Welt*, Mainz 2005, pp. 52–53 and more generally to the Ptolemaic period by V.F. VANDERLIP, *The Four Greek Hymns of Isidorus and the Cult of Isis*, Toronto 1972 [= *Four Greek Hymns*], p. 86. For a summary of the problem of the origin – 'Greek or Egyptian' – of the Memphite text see Y. GRANDJEAN, *Une nouvelle aréalogie d'Isis á Maronée*, Leiden 1975, pp. 12–15. The Isis aretalogies from Medinet Maadi in Egypt from the First century BCE (see VANDERLIP, *op cit.*, *pass.*) indicate no knowledge of Isis as a deity of rebirth or of Isiac mysteries, though the *Second Hymn* (*Ibid.*, pp. 35–36; lines 7–8) declares that those *bound in mortal illness in the grip of death, if they (but) pray to you, quickly attain your (renewal of) life*; see also H. KOCKELMANN, *Praising the Goddess. A Comparative and Annotated Re-Edition of Six Demotic Hymns and Praises Addressed to Isis*, Berlin-New York 2008, p. 66, who references the same hymn.

⁷⁸ For a slightly different interpretation for the architecture, see F. DUNAND, C. ZIVIE-COCHE, *Gods and Men in Egypt: 3000 BCE to 395 CE*, Paris 1991, pp. 300–301.

⁷⁹ See VENIT, *Referencing Isis, passim*; EAD., *Death and Taxes, passim*.

Because of its name, the Alexandrian suburb of Eleusis has evoked consideration as a site for the cult of Demeter and Persephone in Egypt, and paintings of the abduction of Persephone by Hades, found both in Alexandria⁸⁰ and in House-tomb 3 at Tuna al-Gebel,⁸¹ attest either to a purely metaphorical use of the image to reference a blessed afterlife or, more specifically (and, I think, perhaps more likely), to an adherence of the inhabitants of the tomb to the mysteries of Demeter and Kore.⁸² On the basis of the decoration of other house-tombs at Tuna al-Gebel, however, the mysteries of Dionysos find the most traction at the site.

Epigraphic evidence for Dionysiac mysteries within Egypt stems from two Ptolemaic-period sources – an edict of Ptolemy IV Philopator (221–205 BCE), which directs persons who initiate to Dionysos to sail to Alexandria in order to register⁸³ and an Orphic/Dionysiac papyrus from Gurôb,⁸⁴ dated to the mid-Third century BCE, which preserves a roughly written *hieros logos* that may have been used as a vehicle for initiation by one of these ‘religious practitioners’.⁸⁵ More topically and with greater temporal propinquity, as well, painted decoration from at least three house-tombs at Tuna al-Gebel that include Dionysiac cult paraphernalia⁸⁶ indicate a continuation of the cult into Roman times and permit House-tomb 16, in which the Oedipus painting was ‘hung,’ but which shows no direct evidence for Dionysiac worship, to be – with caution – added to the other monuments that revel in the mysteries of the god.

Regardless of the specific cult addressed, the extraordinary choice of the subject of the Oedipus story and its idiosyncratic and original means of presentation argue for a highly sophisticated clientele at Hermopolis Magna and one that is deeply engaged in furthering its chances of a blessed afterlife. The Oedipus painting from House-tomb 16 remains a major moment in the history of Graeco-Roman painting and an evocative monument in the religious history of Graeco-Roman Egypt, and it serves as a fitting tribute to the life and work of Professor Zsolt Kiss.

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⁸⁰ Initially published by A.-M. GUIMIER-SORBETS and M. SEIF AL-DIN, Les deux tombes de Perséphone dans la nécropole de Kom al-Chougafa à Alexandrie, *BCH* 121, 1997, pp. 355–410.

⁸¹ PERDRIZET, *Maison fun.*, pp. 73–76; S. GABRA, É. DRIOTON, *Peintures à fresques et scènes peintes à Hermopolis Ouest (Touna al-Gebel)*, Cairo 1954, pl. 14.

⁸² On the former, see note 1, above.

⁸³ For the papyrus, see F. GRAF, S.I. JOHNSTON, *Ritual Texts for the Afterlife. Orpheus and the Bacchic Gold Tablets*, London-New York 2007, pp. 188–189; for the edict of Ptolemy IV Philopator, see *ibid.*, pp. 189–190; the period of the decree is not absolutely secure and may instead date of the reign of Philopator’s father Euergetes (*ibid.* p. 190), but the absolute date is not of consequence here.

⁸⁴ J. HORDERN, Notes on the Orphic Papyrus from Gurôb (P. Gurôb 1; Pack² 2464), *ZPE* 129, 2000, pp. 131–140; dated by J.G. Smyly (*ibid.*, p. 131).

⁸⁵ H. BOWDEN, *Mystery Cults of the Ancient World*, Princeton 2010, p. 137.

⁸⁶ PERDRIZET, *Maison fun.*, pp. 77–79 (House-tomb 4), p. 89 (House-tomb 11), and pp. 94–96 (House-tomb 14).