

# TRANSFORMING THE DEAD



DIANA CRAIG PATCH

GALLERY 132

EGYPTIAN ART FACSIMILE ROTATION 2014

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# Preface

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The small installation presented in the following catalogue explores the necessary steps in a funeral that would ensure a successful eternal life for a newly deceased family member. The accompanying texts reflect the gallery panel and labels at the time of the exhibition. In order to view each facsimile's record on The Met's website, click on the image in the catalogue.

All objects in this catalogue are part of the collection of The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Unless otherwise indicated, additional illustrations are from The Metropolitan Museum of Art Department of Egyptian Art Archives.

The gallery rotation was made possible by the generosity of the Friends of Egyptian Art.

# Views of the Installation in Gallery 132



# CATALOGUE

# Transforming the Dead

“May they (the gods) grant a good lifetime and a perfect burial after old age,  
interment on the west (bank) of Thebes, my image enduring and prospering . . .  
for the *ka* of the Overseer of Draftsmen, Didia.”  
(Dynasty 19, reign of Seti I, ca. 1294–1279 B.C.)

Every ancient Egyptian hoped to make a safe journey from this life into the next. Consequently, a successful rebirth was the focus of all Egyptian funerary practices. Achieving this transformation required planning and close adherence to the specific steps of funerary ritual.

A person was believed to be composed of “physical” elements—body, name, heart, and shadow—and of spiritual elements—the *ka* and *ba*. At death, these parts became disassociated, and rituals were designed to reunite them so that the deceased could live again. Of primary importance was the body’s preservation, achieved through mummification. The mummy’s coffin sheltered an individual’s physical elements and gave the *ba* an eternal home.

The *ka*, however, required an image for its protection, ideally a statue with the person’s name, which was placed in the tomb. Food and burial goods were needed for eternal sustenance.

In addition to mummification and the building and equipping of the tomb, many rituals were designed to address the dead’s spiritual needs when traveling to the afterlife. This journey entailed traversing the dangerous realm of the underworld to arrive safely at judgment, where the heart of the deceased was weighed. A positive outcome on the scale ensured the deceased’s acceptance by Osiris, lord of the afterlife, into a blessed state and guaranteed them a permanent place in the afterlife, a world that mimicked Earth, but did not have any of its negative aspects.



*Purifying and Mourning the Dead. Facsimile painted in 1920–21 by Charles K. Wilkinson, Rogers Fund, 1930 (30.4.108). Original: New Kingdom, Dynasty 18, reign of Amenhotep III–IV (ca. 1390–1349 B.C.); Thebes, Sheikh Abd el-Qurna, Tomb of Nebamun and Ipuky (TT 181)*

# Offering Scenes



Scenes of the deceased seated at an offering table or receiving offerings of food from their children represent the outcome of Egyptian funerary rites. The dead have achieved blessed status through ritual, and now receive the sustenance that allows them to survive eternally.

The eldest son was responsible for the funeral and cult of the deceased. To the left, the eldest son of Djehutyemhab extends a tall bouquet to his father, whose image is

only partly preserved. Other children follow bringing fruit, fish, birds, and a small calf. On the right, Djehutyemhab and his wife, Baketkhonsu, are seated before an offering table.

Djehutyemhab took over an unfinished tomb from an earlier owner. Here, the earlier multicolored hieroglyphs contrast with Djehutyemhab's simple red additions.

**Facsimile painted in 1908 by Norman de Garis Davies**

Rogers Fund, 1915 (15.5.15)

**Original:**

New Kingdom, Dynasty 19, reign of Ramesses II (ca. 1279–1213 B.C.) or later  
Thebes, Sheikh Abd el-Qurna, tomb of Djehuty reused by Djehutyemhab (TT 45)

# Offering Table Scene



Here, Djehuty, seated with his mother (who has the same name), raises his right hand slightly to reach toward the offering table. Above the scene is written:

“Coming in peace from doing what Amun favors, receiving the daily *snw*-bread (temple bread), by the scribe Djehuty and his beloved mother, Djehuty.”

The Egyptians redistributed food offerings made at a god’s altar among temple personnel and the deceased in the necropolis. Djehuty could hope to receive a portion of these offerings eternally as one of the blessed dead and as a continuation of the share he had in life as an overseer of weavers in the temple.

**Facsimile painted in 1907–8 by Norman de Garis Davies**

Rogers Fund, 1915 (15.5.8)

**Original:**

New Kingdom, Dynasty 18, reign of Amenhotep II (ca. 1427–1400 B.C.)

Thebes, Sheikh Abd el-Qurna, tomb of Djehuty reused by Djehutyemhab (TT 45)



# Transport of the Deceased across the River

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When an individual died, the corpse was transported by boat from the deceased's home on the east bank of the Nile to the west bank, where the cemeteries were located. On landing, the body was first taken to the embalming place, where it was mummified.

Two special mourners, called the *djerty*, appear alongside the deceased in processions.

Here, they stand to either side of the canopied cabin of the boat, wearing red dresses and headcloths. These women enact the role of Isis and Nephthys, who mourned the death of their brother and Isis's husband, Osiris. Another woman with loose hair crouches and laments in front of the canopy.

**Facsimile painted in 1912 by Norman de Garis Davies**

Rogers Fund, 1915 (15.5.7)

**Original:**

New Kingdom, Dynasty 20, reign of Ramesses III (ca. 1184–1153 B.C.)  
Thebes, el-Khokha, Tomb of Haremhab (TT 207)

# Transport of the Mummy to the Necropolis



Once the seventy-day embalming period with its attendant rituals was complete, the mummy of the deceased, housed in its coffin, had to be transported to its tomb in the necropolis.

Nakhtamun's coffin is placed on a bed under the canopy of a boat-shaped shrine carried on the shoulders of men. The boat-shrine is simultaneously attached to ropes held by

men on the upper right and cattle on the lower right, as though it were being dragged on a sledge. Nakhtamun's son Amenabu leads the procession, holding a burning censer and a water jar for purification. A son and grandson appear as mourners beside the shrine carrying the coffin.

**Facsimile painted in 1933 by Nina de Garis Davies**

Rogers Fund, 1933 (33.8.20)

**Original:**

New Kingdom, Dynasty 19, reign of Ramesses II (ca. 1279–1213 B.C.)  
Thebes, Sheikh Abd el-Qurna, tomb of Nakhtamun (TT 341)

# Opening of the Mouth and Eyes



Below the procession to Paury's tomb, priests perform the ritual of the Opening of the Mouth and Eyes on the statue and mummy of the tomb owner so that they are able to see and eat in the afterlife.

In sequence, from right to left, a priest touches the mouth of the statue with an adze-shaped implement and a ram-headed serpentine instrument, extends a white *abet*-stone,

touches the mouth with a leg of beef, purifies the statue with pellets of natron salt, and extends the first instrument again. At the left, the mummies of Paury and his wife are upright in front of the tomb. A priest reads from a papyrus and stands beside a table that holds supplies to perform the ritual on the mummies, while another purifies them with water.

**Facsimile painted in 1935 by Nina de Garis Davies**

Rogers Fund, 1935 (35.101.3)

**Original:**

New Kingdom, Dynasty 18, reign of Amenhotep III (ca. 1390–1352 B.C.)  
Thebes, Sheikh Abd el-Qurna, tomb of Paury (TT 139)

# Voyage to Abydos



Funerary beliefs envision the mummy or statue of the deceased traveling to Abydos, the city of the great god of resurrection, Osiris. There, the deceased participated in the festival of Osiris, when the god went forth from his temple in procession and was defended by his son from the attacks of his enemies.

On the left, Userhat and his wife travel northward in peace to Abydos. The boat

cabin conceals their figures so that it is not clear whether coffins or statues make the journey. Once there, the two travelers worship Osiris. On the right, they return from Abydos in a boat with a raised sail. On landing, they meet the god Anubis, who represents the return to the tomb.

**Facsimile painted in 1909–10 by Norman de Garis Davies**

Rogers Fund, 1930 (30.4.34)

**Original:**

New Kingdom, Dynasty 19, reign of Seti I (ca. 1294–1279 B.C.)  
Thebes, Sheikh Abd el-Qurna, tomb of Userhat (TT 51)

# Weighing the Heart



Ritually prepared, reanimated, and interred, the deceased enters the underworld, where various trials are encountered, chief among them the weighing of their heart.

The left tray of the scales, now destroyed, once held the heart of Nakhtamun. To the far right, remnants may be seen of the tiny crouching figure of Maat, goddess of truth, in the opposite tray. Anubis inspects the

plumb line of the balance. The area hacked out to the right preserves the shape of the Devourer—“her front a crocodile, her rear a hippopotamus” as the hieroglyphs above her state—who would consume anyone whose heart was not balanced with Maat. The winged figure aloft is unusual, and might represent the justified Nakhtamun.

**Facsimile painted in 1933(?) by Nina de Garis Davies**

Rogers Fund, 1933 (33.8.21)

**Original:**

New Kingdom, Dynasty 19, reign of Ramesses II (ca. 1279–1213 B.C.) or later  
Thebes, Sheikh Abd el-Qurna, tomb of Nakhtamun (TT 341)

# Admitted before the Throne of Osiris



Once acquitted at the weighing of the heart, the deceased enters the following of Osiris, lord of the afterlife, and worships him.

Userhat kneels before Osiris, who sits inside a golden shrine. Behind Osiris stands the goddess of the west, land of burial and resurrection, who protects him with her wings. Between Osiris and Userhat are an offering

table and flowers, including a tall bouquet known as *ankh* (also the word for life), a bunch of lotus flowers, symbolic of rejuvenation, and a leafy convolvulus associated with the passage to another world. The effusiveness of the flowers seems to evoke the joy in this appearance before Osiris.

**Facsimile painted 1909–10 by Norman de Garis Davies**

Rogers Fund, 1930 (30.4.32)

**Original:**

New Kingdom, Dynasty 19, reign of Seti I (ca. 1294–1279 B.C.)  
Thebes, Sheikh Abd el-Qurna, tomb of Userhat (TT 51)

# Field of Iaru



In the afterworld, the deceased also joined the sun god's boat to cross the sky and travel beneath the land. Along the way was a special paradise called the Field of Iaru—Field of Reeds—visualized as a landscape of waterways and abundant crops.

At lower right, a small snake-headed sun boat arrives at the Field of Iaru. The various green ovals across the scene represent named

locations. Above two registers of flowers and orchards, Sennedjem and his wife, Ineferti, plow, sow, and harvest flax, and, in the next register, they reap wheat. At top, they worship gods whom they encounter in this paradise. At right, Sennedjem has had the customary scenes of boating and worship reworked to include his sons Rahotep and Khonsu.

**Facsimile painted in 1922 by Charles K. Wilkinson**

Rogers Fund, 1930 (30.4.2)

**Original:**

New Kingdom, Dynasty 19, reign of Ramesses I–Ramesses II (ca. 1295–1213 B.C.)  
Thebes, Deir el-Medina, tomb of Sennedjem (TT 1)

