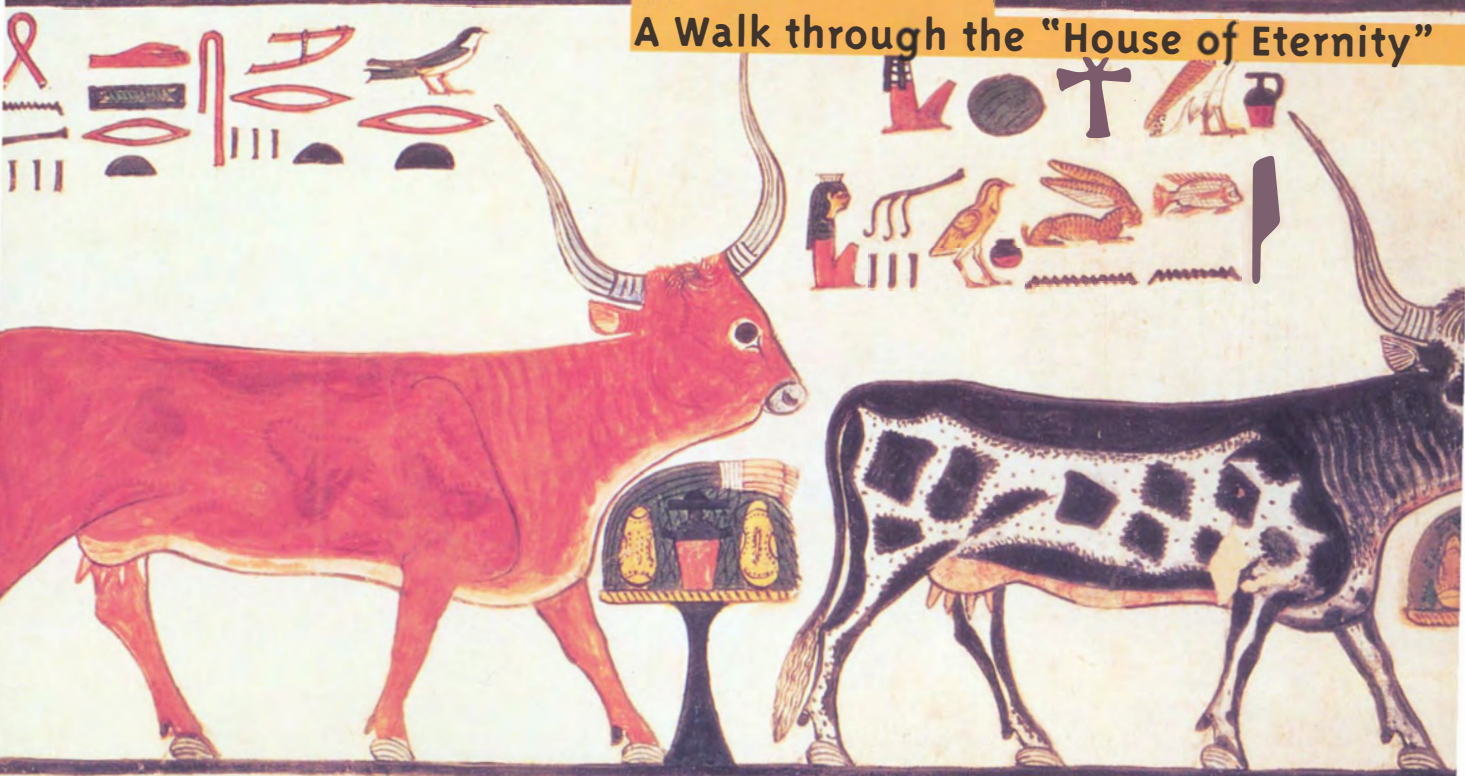


Among the Immortals:

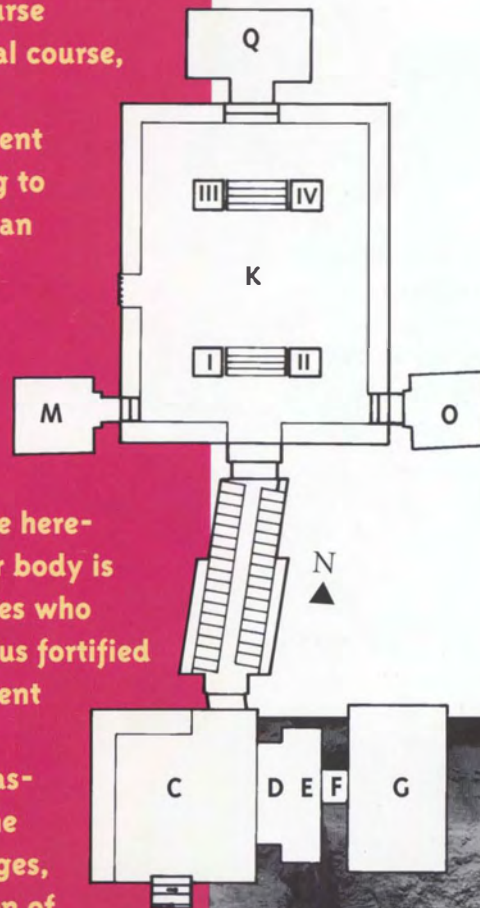
A Walk through the "House of Eternity"



Like the river Nile, the geographic course of the tomb runs south to north. Its ritual course, however, is east-west, corresponding to the course of the sun. The initial descent angles slightly to the northwest, leading to an entrance chamber with recesses and an auxiliary chamber to the east. From this entrance hall, a second descent, oriented due north, leads yet lower to the second level and the burial chamber itself.

From the wall paintings we can see the story of Nefertari's journey to the hereafter unfold. In the upper chambers, her body is preserved and she is greeted by divinities who grant her a place in the netherworld. Thus fortified with occult powers, she begins her descent to the burial chamber. Here she secures immortality by enduring an ordeal of passage through the gates and portals of the netherworld. Having met all the challenges, Nefertari's body is restored by Horus, son of Isis, in his guise as officiating priest. The queen then takes her place in the netherworld, eternally united with Osiris.

Two essential aspects define Nefertari's "house of eternity": aesthetics and meaning. These two aspects exist simultaneously within the tomb, as illustrated vignettes and hieroglyphic texts. Though visually captivating, neither illustrations nor texts are immediately intelligible to most viewers. In this walk through, the vignettes are described and interpreted. Some of the shorter hieroglyphic texts are translated in the body of the section, while longer texts appear as sidebars. Italicized words are defined within the text or in the margin the first time they appear.



*Previous spread:
The illustration of
Chapter 148 from the
Book of the Dead
occupies the entire
south wall of Chamber
G. In front of each
of the seven cows and
the bull are offerings
of vegetables, milk,
and bread.*

*The entrance to
the tomb at the time
of its discovery by
Schiaparelli in 1904.*

*Photo: Courtesy of the
Museo Egizio, Turin.*

Descent and Entrance

A flight of eighteen steps with central slipway leads down from the gate to the tomb entrance. This first stairway is undecorated, but the door jambs and lintel identify the tomb as Nefertari’s.

The text on the left jamb is nearly obliterated; but the one on the right may still be read: “Hereditary noblewoman; great of favors; possessor of charm, sweetness, and love; mistress of Upper and Lower Egypt; the Osiris; the king’s great wife, mistress of the two lands, Nefertari, beloved of Mut, revered before Osiris.” The lintel bears faint traces of the setting sun flanked by two *oudjat* eyes and *cartouches* of the queen surmounted with the double plume.

To the left, the door *thickness* is badly damaged. But the figure of Nekhbet, the vulture goddess of Upper Egypt, can be made out, together with her name. Her utterance—that she has given life to Nefertari—has all but vanished. On the right *reveal* are equally fragmentary traces of Edjo, the cobra goddess of Lower Egypt. The pairing of these two deities expresses the division of Egypt into northern and southern kingdoms, united by King Menes in the distant past. Although largely symbolic, there may have been some historical foundation to this separation.

The trapezoids formed between the sloping roof and the upper margin of the scenes are filled with coiled and winged serpents who confer life and dominion on the queen. The door *soffit* carries a representation of the sun setting behind a sand hill and flanked by two kites, birds whose shrill cries recall mourning women.

The left bird wears the emblem of Isis, the right that of Nephthys. The setting sun signals that we have entered the nighttime realm of the dead, who are accompanied by Isis and Nephthys, sisters of Osiris, king of the netherworld.



THE TEXTS IN THE TOMB

Since Nefertari was not a sovereign, the choice of texts that could appear in her tomb was restricted. The architects and priests who determined the decorative program chose selections from chapters of the Book of the Dead.

Texts in the Book of the Dead evolved from utterances that first appeared in the Sixth Dynasty pyramids of the Old Kingdom and were further elaborated in coffin texts during the Middle Kingdom.

Called by the Egyptians “The Book of the Coming Forth by Day,” the Book of the Dead consisted of nearly two hundred utterances intended to help guide the dead on their journeys into the beyond. These texts, or “spells,” expressed the aspirations of ordinary Egyptians to flourish in the netherworld and join the community of imperishable spirits. Not all the texts in the book had to be actually inscribed to be effective.

Well-known chapters of the Book of the Dead included the canopic formula for protection of the viscera (Chapter 151); the heart scarab text to restrain the heart from bearing witness against the deceased (Chapter 30); a formula for the servant figurines, called *ushabtis*, who toiled in place of the dead, performing specific,

laborious tasks in the hereafter (Chapter 6); and the negative confession, in which the dead professed to have done no harm to widows, children, or their fellow men (Chapter 125).

Inscribed in the tomb of Nefertari are portions of Chapters 17, 94, 144, 146, and 148.

oudjat literally, the healthy eye

cartouche on Egyptian monuments, an oval or oblong figure containing the name of a ruler or deity

thickness the side of an opening in a wall, such as a door or window

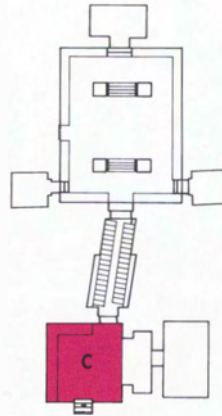
reveal the jamb of a door or window; the thickness of the door frame

soffit the horizontal, lower edge of a roof or the underside of a molding that projects along the top of a wall; the inside surface of a vault or an arch

senet from the ancient Egyptian verb meaning to pass [someone or something], the word is applied to a board game consisting of thirty squares with movable gaming pieces anciently termed the dancers. In certain funerary contexts, the deceased is represented playing this game alone. His/her unseen opponent symbolizes Fate, who must be defeated in order to gain immortality in the hereafter

ba in Egyptian mythology, the soul, symbolized by a bird with a human head; that part of the soul free to leave the tomb temporarily

sekhem powerful, to have power



Chamber C

Within the tomb itself, the first chamber is nearly square (5 x 5.2 meters), with a rock-cut table along its west and north sides. Scenes on the right-hand side of this room relate to the recesses and chamber beyond. On the left, however, the inscription and vignettes are drawn exclusively from Chapter 17 of the Book of the Dead.¹

This chapter asserts the identity of the gods Re' and Atum, a theological equation dating at least to the Old Kingdom. On a deeper level, its theme is the transformation of the queen into an effective being in the afterlife, one who will join the company of Osiris. Her ability to do so depends less on any special knowledge that she may possess than on the text itself, structured as a series of questions and responses. Chapter 17 is one of the longest and oldest spells in the Book of the Dead.²

In the illustrations on the south wall, the queen is shown in three of her different transformations: first, playing *senet*; next, as a *ba*; and finally, adoring a composite,



lion-headed god. The first two transformations are explicitly mentioned in the opening of Chapter 17. On the left, Nefertari sits on a high-backed chair resting on a reed mat, the gaming table before her. The entire scene is framed within a shelter made of reeds. The queen is dressed in a sheer white gown reaching to her sandals and wears a vulture-headed cap or head-dress. In her right hand is a *sekhem* scepter, and with her left she is just about to move a *senet* piece. The rest of the space is filled with her name and titles.

The next vignette shows the queen as a *ba* bird perched atop a low shrine. The *ba*, the mobile portion of Nefertari’s soul, is free to leave the tomb temporarily. The figure of the kneeling queen, her hands raised in adoration, seems curiously placed until we realize that it is meant to address the twin-headed lion god, the earth god, Akeru, on the west wall.

Akeru is actually a complex of images: the sun rising above the horizon and the sky above are integral to this image. It is meant to invoke the morning sun, a recurrent metaphor for rebirth in Egyptian art. All three figures on the south wall are paying homage to this composite figure, Akeru.

The *senet* scene, the *ba*, and kneeling figure were frequently shown together in contemporary funerary papyri. Here, however, the architecture of the tomb required that this scene be folded at the corner.

Opposite:
The illustration on the south wall of Chamber C shows Nefertari in three transformations: playing the board game *senet*; as the human-headed *ba* bird; kneeling in adoration.

*Detail from Chamber C, south wall. The *ba* bird, representing the soul, was free to travel outside the tomb during the day.*



BOOK OF THE DEAD

1 In funerary papyri, text and illustration are integrated in one long, continuous roll, but here the artists separated image and text, placing illustrations in the upper register and words in the middle. The correspondence between the two is therefore interrupted and, in a few instances, not close at all.

2 The introductory chapter heading is contained in the first nine columns and succinctly summarizes its overall intent. It reads: “Beginning of the praises and recitations to come forth and go down into the Necropolis, to be spiritualized in the Beautiful West,

*the coming forth by day in order to assume the forms among any forms he [sic] wishes, playing *senet* and sitting in the booth, coming forth as a living *ba* by the Osiris, the king’s great wife, mistress of the two lands, Nefertari, beloved of Mut, justified after he [sic] died. It is effective to do this on earth, so that it happens entirely according to instructions.”*

The use of masculine pronouns in reference to the queen suggests the copyist lost his concentration from time to time, a natural enough response, given that the funerary honors accorded Nefertari were highly unusual for a woman.



A god, his hands stretched over two ovals containing oudjat eyes, on the lintel over the entrance to Recess D.

benu the heron, or ibis, a wading bird indigenous to the Nile, with long legs and a long, slender, curved bill

rebus a composite of letters, signs, objects, etc., that combine to suggest phrases or words

shen a ring or a protective enclosure such as the cartouche surrounding a royal name

cavetto a molding having a concave curve of about ninety degrees

On the west wall are a half dozen vignettes. Next to the image of the earth god, there is an especially effective image of a heron or *benu*, a bird with phoenix-like qualities, often labeled as the soul of Re⁷.

The central image of this register, a kiosk sheltering a mummy on a lion-headed bier, sounds a distinctly funerary note. The white mummy shell is bound with red linen bands, and a funeral mask covers the mummy's head. A canopy of bead work is stretched over it but appears as a backdrop. The kites have taken up their customary positions as sentinels: Nephthys at the head, and Isis at the foot.

The kneeling god to the right is a water god, shown dark-skinned, with pendulous breasts. His left hand is poised on an oval containing a stylized falcon eye. This grouping is a *rebus* for *shen* and *oudjat*, two hieroglyphic tokens for protection and health. With his right hand, the water god holds a notched palm rib, symbolizing abundance of years, presumably his gift to Nefertari.

The following two vignettes and text are seriously degraded. Only traces survive of a standing figure, facing right. In the funerary papyri, he is called "the great green," possibly a reference to fecundity.



The final cluster of images on this wall shows a flat-roofed shrine with *cavetto* cornice and a scene involving a seated, falcon-headed god. Beyond is a faint suggestion of another *oudjat* eye. Textual references to these images appear on the north wall of the room.

From left to right, the text of Chapter 17 continues to scroll its way along the north wall, ending at the left door jamb that marks the descent to the burial chamber. The vignettes in the upper register do not correspond to the texts beneath.

Much-ravaged at the left hand is the image of a reclining cow, the Celestial Cow. She is followed by a symmetrical grouping of the sons of Horus, in pairs on either side of a wooden shrine. Within the shrine is an image of Anubis, depicted as a recumbent jackal.

Facing this cluster are two seated mummiform figures, one falcon-headed, the other human. The first is likely Re', the second, Shu, the divine form of light and air. All these illustrations coordinate with portions of Chapter 17, but their position in the funerary papyri can vary greatly.

The stone table that runs along the north and west sections of Chamber C has a semicircular molding and *cavetto* cornice with alternating bands painted red-blue-

green-blue against a white background. The table was probably designed to hold funerary equipment destined for the celebration of the cult of the dead queen. Along the table's front, niches have been hollowed out, three on the west and two on the north, leaving what seem to be stout piers to hold it up. These all carry the queen's title: "king's great wife Nefertari, beloved of Mut."

The backs of the niches are painted to resemble three round-topped, wooden shrines, not unlike a little coffer found in the tomb clearance and now in Turin. Possibly its place was under this table, in one of the niches. On the left inner face of the northern niche, west side, is a docket recording a delivery of plaster to the "right" and "left" gangs of workmen who excavated this tomb. The text around the edge of the table is Osiris' declaration of his intent to provide Nefertari a place in his realm and in the divine assembly, as well as to give her the appearance of her father, Re'.

In the middle of the north wall, the decoration breaks. The orientation of the figures makes this clear. On the east side, we see five figures facing right. The four farthest to the east are the sons of Horus, genii whose role is to guard the viscera of

The upper section of the west wall of Chamber C before conservation illustrating sections of Chapter 17 of the Book of the Dead. Careful examination of these vignettes—especially the heron and the funeral bier—afford an ideal chance to observe the balance maintained between carving and painting.





the deceased. From the right, they are Imsety, a human-headed guardian responsible for the liver; the baboon-faced Hapy, custodian of the lungs; Qebehsenef, the falcon-headed keeper of the intestines; and a canine, Duamutef, who has charge of the stomach. The scribe mistakenly exchanged the names of Qebehsenef and Duamutef. Behind them sits an anonymous falcon-headed god, perhaps Horus himself.

The prominent placement of these figures above the door leading to the lower reaches of the tomb and the sarcophagus is thoroughly appropriate, as the queen's viscera were stored below, in the tiny niche

Opposite:
The north wall of Chamber C including the entrance to the descending corridor. The five figures over the entryway are the four sons of Horus

whose roles are to guard the deceased's viscera. The falcon-headed figure to their left, though unspecified, is thought to be Horus himself.

cut in the west side of the burial chamber. Each of these minor gods is assigned one of the cardinal points of the compass, and each associates with one of four goddesses — Isis, Nephthys, Serket, and Neith — deities who appear on the *canopic* vessels and the exterior of many coffins.

Returning to the entrance to Chamber C, on the eastern part of the south wall (right of the entrance), we find a scene of Nefertari as a supplicant before a seated figure of the mummiform Osiris. The queen faces into the tomb and Osiris out, thus establishing the fundamental orientation of figures. The gods are, in a sense, already resident in the tomb, and so they face out, like hosts greeting a most esteemed guest, in this case, the queen herself.

Nefertari has her hands raised in homage to Osiris. She is robed in a white pleated garment with a red sash about her waist. It is a luxurious garment, altogether typical of the elaborate fashions of the Ramesside court. It is also the dress of

Detail from north wall of Chamber C showing figures illustrating Chapter 17 of the Book of the Dead.

canopic chest in ancient Egypt, a chest with four urns containing the mummified internal organs of the dead. Named after Canopus, a seaport in the Nile Delta east of Alexandria, where they were first recognized



a human being, one who comes from the perishable world. The queen wears her characteristic headdress: a twin-plumed vulture cap. She is identified as "the Osiris, king's great wife, and mistress of the two lands, Nefertari, beloved of Mut, justified before the great god."

The great god is, of course, Osiris, who is seated in a kiosk to the left. The kiosk is topped by a frieze of rampant serpents (*uraei*) with sun disks, resting on a striped cavetto cornice. Osiris wears an elaborate crown called the *atef*. Made of papyrus, it imitates the bulbous white crown of Upper Egypt, but has ostrich plumes affixed to each side. He is swathed in mummy bandages and clasps the crook, a token of kingship, and the flail. His hands are crossed over his chest. The flesh of the god is green, signifying his formidable powers of rejuvenation. Between him and the queen is a narrow table with mummy-form figures of the four sons of Horus. Behind Osiris are amuletic devices signifying protection (*sa*), life (*ankh*), stability (*djed*), and dominion (*was*).

Opposite:
Detail from the
south wall, east side,
of Chamber C.
Nefertari is standing
in adoration before
an enthroned Osiris.

*The jackal-headed
god, Anubis, on the
south side of the east
wall of Chamber C.*

uraeus via the ancient Greek word for tail, this term is generally applied to the cobra, which the ancient Egyptians associated with Edjo, the tutelary goddess of Lower Egypt, and which, together with Nekhbet, often decorated the brow of the pharaoh. By extension, the cobra might be employed as a motif connoting protection in a general sense

atef similar to the white crown of Upper Egypt but with ostrich plumes affixed to each side

sa protection

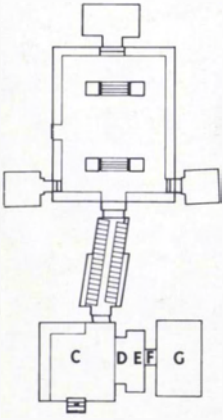
ankh life; an ancient Egyptian symbol of life, consisting of a cross with a loop at the top

djed stability. The *djed* amulet was a hieroglyph representing a bundle of stalks tied together, reproduced in various media as a symbol connoting stability, endurance, and the like

was dominion



Preparation for Recesses and Side Chamber G



From the middle of Chamber C we can look east through Recesses D, E, and F to side Chamber G. The sides of the frame of the first recess are composed of a standing figure of Osiris on the left and, on the right, the figure of Anubis, Osiris' son by Nephthys. Both figures look toward Nefertari, as if to coax her forward.

The lintel, the upper framing device, links the two compositions. On it is a frieze of rampant *uraei*, alternating with blue feathers, facing outward from a central figure of a god whose hands are posed over two ovals containing *oudjat* eyes. This frieze is reminiscent of the *shen* and *oudjat rebus*. The feathers symbolize Ma'at while the cobra has generic protective properties.

The standing image of Osiris shows him within a shrine with high-arched roof. The god now wears a less-detailed version of the *atef* crown: feathers astride the white crown of Upper Egypt. The customary regalia are in his hands. The curious device either side of Osiris is a leopard skin twisted about a rod set in a mortar. It is the fetish of Anubis and is profoundly linked with this god's role as the principal embalmer of the dead. In fact, Anubis appears on the right panel of the frame, a jackal-headed god clutching a *was* scepter in his left hand and *ankh* sign in his right.

The scenes in the recesses and beyond do not form a unity. The architecture has constrained the artists, requiring them to mix scenes that have no clear connection. The gods shown are those featured in the Heliopolitan cycle of deities.

In decorating these recesses, the artists have cleverly paired divine images on left and right surfaces, thus defining the processional axis. The climax will occur in Chamber G, with the back-to-back juxtaposition of Atum, the creator god, and Osiris, quintessential god of salvation and Atum's great-grandson.



Osiris and Anubis flank the entranceway to the recesses and Chamber G.







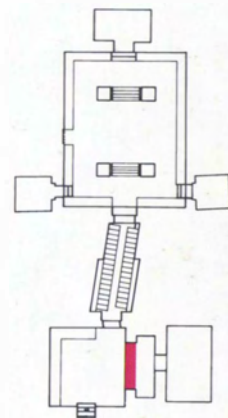
Detail of hieroglyphs from the south wall of Recess D.

Opposite:
The depiction of Neith on the east side of the south wall at the top of the descending corridor is very similar to that on the south wall of Recess D. In both instances the artist has intentionally drawn Neith's emblem so that it bursts through the picture frame, even obscuring a portion of the kheker frieze. This is a small but remarkable breach of the artistic convention.

Recess D

Now we pass through Recess D, two opposing pilasters that define the entryway to Recess E. On the left (north), is the goddess Serket (or Selkis), identifiable by the scorpion on top of her head. She is framed above by a *kheker* frieze, a common architectural ornament representing knotted bunches of vegetal matter such as reeds or grass. Beneath is a representation of the nighttime sky or starry firmament. Serket wears a richly beaded dress with thin shoulder straps, a broad beaded collar, armlets, and wristlets. She faces outward in welcome. Behind are a series of protective emblems that form a benediction of sorts: "protection, life, stability, dominion, all protection like Re', forever."³

A complementary welcoming scene occurs on the right-hand (south) pilaster. This time, the goddess is Neith, whose signature emblem rests atop her head: a greatly stylized image of two bows tied together or possibly a shield and two crossed arrows. She too is dressed in a tight-fitting sheath of beadwork. Protective emblems stand at the ready behind her.⁴



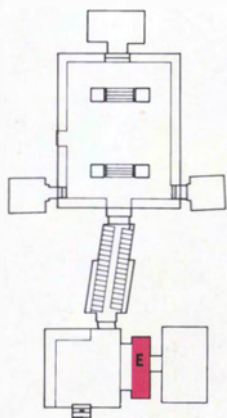
BOOK OF THE DEAD 3 The text reads: "Serket, mistress of heaven and lady of all the gods. I have come before you, [oh] king's great wife, mistress of the two lands, lady of Upper and Lower Egypt, Nefertari, beloved of Mut, justified before Osiris who resides in Abydos, and I have accorded you a place in the sacred land, so that you may appear gloriously in heaven like Re'."

As with all the gods who now guide Nefertari and welcome her to the netherworld, Serket's statement "I have come before you" indicates that the goddess is ready to aid the queen in the new realm that now awaits

her, the hereafter. Thus the queen can rest assured that she is in good hands.

4 Her utterance reads: "Words spoken by Neith, the great royal mother, mistress of heaven and lady of all the gods. I have come before you, king's great wife, mistress of the two lands, lady of Upper and Lower Egypt, Nefertari, beloved of Mut, justified before Osiris who resides in the West, and I have accorded you a place within Igeret, so that you may appear gloriously in heaven like Re'."

Recess E



In Recess E, the pilasters both right and left (behind you as you enter) are decorated with images of the *djed* pillar, a talisman of the god Osiris. The connection with Osiris is manifestly evident in this instance; indeed, the image *is* Osiris, as a *djed* pillar. The exact components are difficult to identify but seem to consist either of stacked vertebrae or bound vegetal elements. Its hieroglyphic meaning is “stability”; and as the distinction between writing and art in ancient Egypt was very vague, its use on a supporting element in the tomb is witty. This clever playing off of decor against architectural function is used to even greater effect in the burial chamber below.

As we enter fully into the recess separating Chambers C and G, we come upon two presentation scenes. On the left, the queen is inducted by Isis into the presence of Kheperi, the seated god with the head of a beetle. On the right side of the recess, Horus Son-of-Isis (Horsiese) leads the queen before seated images of Re’-Horakhty and the Theban Hathor.

Starting with the left-hand scene on the north wall, Isis wears bovine horns, a solar disk between them, and a *uraeus* draped over the solar disk. Her hair is bound with a *fillet*. About her neck is a broad collar whose weight is supported by a *menat*, or counterpoise, visible under her right arm. Isis wears the tight, red, beadwork dress with which we are now familiar. Arm bands and wristlets complete her ensemble of jewelry. In her left hand she holds a *was* scepter; and with her right, she takes Nefertari’s hand, gently drawing her forward.

Urging her on, Isis says: “Come, [oh] king’s great wife, Nefertari, beloved of Mut.



I have made a place for you in the necropolis.” Nefertari, again clothed in the whitest, pleated linen, strides forward. Note that she is shown with two left feet. Her name and titles appear above her in three columns, interrupted by the twin, high-plumed crown we now expect.

The scene wraps at the wall juncture. As we look straight forward (east), we see whom Isis and Nefertari confront: an anthropomorphic deity with the head of a beetle. He is seated on an *imbricated* throne base with the unification symbol in the lower right quadrant. This is a heraldic device made of the plants of Upper and Lower Egypt, twisted about a stylized representation of the lungs and windpipe, the hieroglyph for unity.

The falcon-headed god, Re’-Horakhty, crowned with a sun disk, on the east wall, south side, of Recess E.

Opposite: Nefertari being led by the goddess Isis on the north wall of Recess E.

fillet a thin strip of cloth or other substance circling the head and used to hold the hair in place

imbricated ornamented with an evenly spaced, overlapping pattern, in the manner of fish scales







The god is dressed in a heavy wig, broad collar, green vest held up with shoulder straps, and short kilt (*shendyet*) with a bull's tail, traditional ceremonial dress for gods and kings. He holds the *ankh* sign in his left hand and a *was* staff in his right. Words above the god promise Nefertari "everlastingness like Re', the appearance of Re' in heaven, and a place in the necropolis."

This is Kheperi, the nascent sun god, the morning light. The word "Kheper" is related to the verb meaning "to change or transform"; *kheperu* are forms that a god or human can assume. Thus, Kheperi represents the possibility of Nefertari's transformation through death to a new existence.

The right-hand presentation scene is analogous to the left, except that Horus Son-of-Isis (Horsiese) conducts the queen. He appears as a god with a falcon head, wearing the double crown of united Egypt. Called the *pschent*, this crown combined the red and white crowns that signify Lower and Upper Egypt. Its name means "the double powers." He too wears the *shendyet*, but with the bull's tail trailing behind. Although the label in front of Horsiese mentions his utterance, none is recorded.

The south side of the east wall of Recess E. The goddess Hathor has her arm raised to touch the headdress of Re'-Horakhty seated in front of her.

The pair approach two gods seated on low imbricated thrones: the falcon-headed god is Re'-Horakhty; behind him, Hathor, who resides in Thebes. Re'-Horakhty is dressed almost identically to Kheperi, except for his characteristic solar disk and looping *uraeus*. He utters three short texts. These promise a place in the sacred land, a lifetime as long as that of Re', and eternity, with life, stability, and dominion. Re'-Horakhty, whose name means Horus-of-the-Twin-Horizons, represents the mature sun at midday. Both throne bases display the unification symbol.

The lintel that links these two scenes is emblazoned with a vulture holding in each talon a *shen* sign. The legend appearing between the roof and forward edge of the wings proclaims this to be the vulture Nekhbet, patroness of El-Kab and Hieraconpolis, twin cities of Upper Egypt. Her function is to protect those who pass beneath.

Notice that this doorway is off axis, shifted slightly left. It is possible this was done to accommodate scenes of different dimensions, but more likely the decoration was adapted to suit the tomb's architecture. Despite the axis shift, the primary scene in the chamber ahead—back-to-back figures of Atum and Osiris—is exactly on the axis of the door.

The lintel over the doorway from Recess E shows the vulture Nekhbet with wings outstretched and a protective symbol in each claw.



Recess F

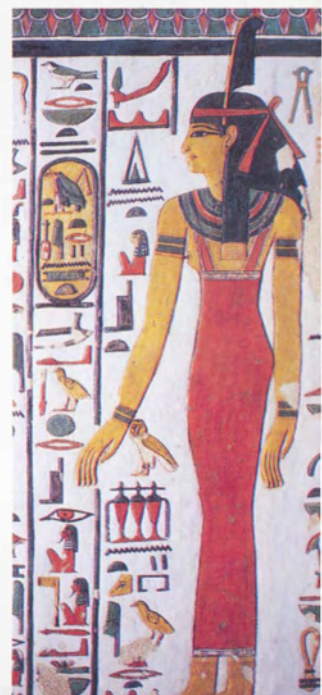
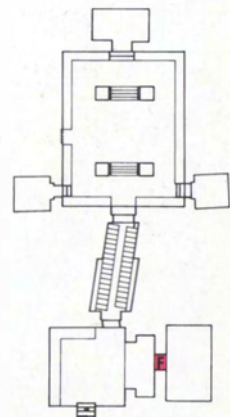
This entrance to side Chamber G is an ideal opportunity to observe the star-spangled roof of the tomb: five-pointed yellow stars against a blue background. Multiple associations signal not only nighttime but also the imperishable circumpolar stars, astral sentinels who never sink below the horizon and were thus equated with the souls of gods and beings who survived the perilous passage through death to the beyond.

Each side of the doorway is decorated with an identical panel: beneath a *kheker* frieze and sky sign is the figure of Ma'at, the goddess of truth and daughter of Re, gazing out toward Nefertari. Ma'at is dressed not in a bead-net dress but a clinging red shift. Her distinguishing feature is the feather on her head.

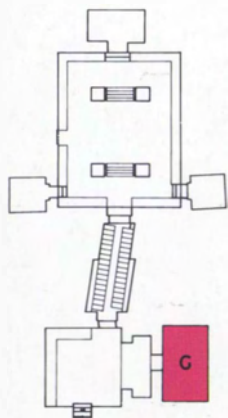
The protective talismans behind Ma'at are more varied than those we have encountered previously. From top to bottom, they offer "protection, life, stability, dominion, all health, all joy, and all her protection, like (the protection of) Re." Locating Ma'at so prominently is probably significant. In most funerary papyri, one of the crucial rites of passage is the judgment of Osiris, in which the heart of the deceased is weighed against Ma'at's Feather of Truth. Neither the judgment scene, nor Chapter 125 of the Book of the Dead, appears anywhere in Nefertari's tomb. Instead, it is echoed in these portraits of Ma'at.

The color of the ceiling is achieved by painting blue over a layer of black. The superimposed yellow stars were laid out along parallel guidelines snapped onto the ceiling from taut cords dipped in white paint.

The goddess Ma'at, with the identifying feather in her headband, on the north side of Recess F. The decoration on the opposite side of the doorway is identical.



Chamber G



Chamber G is about 3 meters deep and 5 meters wide. The ratio of width to depth is 1.66, remarkably close to the ratio of the depression in the queen's burial chamber (1.65) and the northern annex (1.66). This fraction, not far off the "golden" proportion of 1.61, recurs in Egyptian architecture. This chamber also provides the best view of the rock floor of the tomb.

On the left-hand (west) interior wall, behind us, is a single scene framed by the customary sky hieroglyph resting atop two *was* scepters. Nefertari presents cloth to Ptah, one of the principal creator gods. The queen holds her hands up, palms flat, to support a tray bearing four forked supports, the hieroglyph for cloth. On the table in front of her is yet more fabric, labeled linen.

Nefertari offers this to Ptah, the god of ancient Memphis, Egypt's first capital. Swathed in his *cerements*, Ptah stands in a wickerwork booth with arched roof; he peers out at the queen through a small grill, open in front of him. Ptah clutches a staff made of the *was* and *djed* emblems bound together. Above is an assortment of amulets offering "protection, life, stability, dominion, all health, all joy, all his protection, like Re." This scene bears no apparent relation to any other in the room and is not an illustration from the Book of the Dead. It is likely an example of the concept called in Latin *do ut des*: "I give in order that you might give."

The entire north wall of Chamber G is covered by a single presentation scene to the ibis-headed Thoth, god of writing. Thoth sits on an imbricated throne set on a low plinth; he regards the queen across a stand that holds a writer's palette, a water bowl, and a frog amulet. This frog may be what is called a sportive writing for *whm-'nh*, "repeating life," a wish for longevity.

cerements burial garments; a shroud made of cloth treated with wax and used to wrap the body of the deceased

Detail of the god Ptah on the west wall, north side, of Chamber G. In this vignette, Nefertari is giving linen to Ptah to ensure a reciprocal and ample supply for her corpse. This is typical of the contractual arrangements between devout Egyptians and their gods.

Standing in the very middle of the wall, the queen occupies center stage. Bracketed by text behind and Thoth in front, Nefertari is identified as "king's great wife, mistress of the two lands, Nefertari, beloved of Mut, justified before the great god (Osiris)."

In eight columns of text behind the queen is the entirety of Chapter 94 of the Book of the Dead. The columns appear in standard order, facing right and reading from right to left.⁵

Thoth is the patron of writing and functions in judgment scenes as the recorder. With Thoth, Ma'at at the entryway, and Osiris on the back wall, the principal players in the standard judgment scene have all been assembled. As the queen is repeatedly referred to as "the Osiris," it is certain that she has successfully completed this essential rite of passage, even though it is not shown.

THE BOOK OF THE DEAD 5 The first two columns provide the chapter heading and subject: "Utterance for requesting the water bowl and writing palette from Thoth in the Necropolis by the king's great wife, mistress of the two lands, Nefertari, beloved of Mut, justified."

The queen's recitation is next: "Oh great one who sees his father, keeper of the writings of Thoth. Behold, I am come spiritualized, with a soul, mighty, and equipped with the writings of Thoth. Bring me the messenger of Akeru (the lion-headed earth god) who is with Seth. Bring me the bowl, bring

me the palette from that of Thoth, their secrets within them. [Oh] Gods. Behold, I am a scribe. Bring me the excrement of Osiris [for] my writings, that I may perform the instructions of Osiris, the great god, perfectly every day, consisting of the good which you have decreed me. [Oh] Re'-Horakhty, I shall act the truth and shall attain the truth."





On the long east wall of Chamber G is the climactic scene of the complex of rooms formed by the recesses and side chamber, the very reason for their existence. The religious philosophy it embodies is also significant. Two presentation scenes are juxtaposed back-to-back: on the left, Nefertari before Osiris; on the right, the queen before Atum. Functioning as a scene divider, a huge flabellum, or fan, mounted in an oval stand, separates Osiris and Atum.

In both scenes, the queen is attired in a white pleated gown. On her head is the familiar crown. In both, her left hand is by her side. In her extended right hand, she holds a *sekhem* staff, signifying her power to make offerings. Some asymmetries of posture result; but from a ritual point of view, this was the best solution. The right hand should hold the staff.

Lighted, smoking braziers rest atop bountiful offerings prepared for the gods. The left altar supports a towering pile of food stuffs heaped onto three mats. Recognizable are cuts of meat, loaves of bread, and vegetables. Receiving these is Osiris, shrouded in his white cerements and seated upon an imbricated throne with unification symbol, a reed mat, beneath. He holds his customary regalia and wears the *atef* crown, this time made of rushwork. Small images of the four sons of Horus rest on a stand before him, and just beneath may be seen the fetish of Anubis.⁶

Opposite:

In this part of the long scene occupying the entire east wall of Chamber G, Nefertari is standing before a pile of offerings of meat, bread, and vegetables.

The companion scene shows the queen presenting her burnt offering to Atum. The god is portrayed in the double crown of Upper and Lower Egypt. He wears a false beard held in place by a chin strap. In his hands are an *ankh* sign and a *was* staff. Protective devices are arranged vertically behind him. We learn that he is "Atum, lord of the two lands, the Heliopolitan, the great god and lord of the sacred land."

As it captures the first instance that Nefertari makes a formal presentation to Osiris, paramount lord of the dead, this scene in Chamber G marks a crucial moment in the queen's spiritual journey. Although the sepulchral overtones of the encounter are minimized, funerary associations are always present where Osiris is concerned. Thus Atum, the creator god, is here communing with his great-grandson, Osiris, the savior god, who survived death and dismemberment. Osiris' triumphant metamorphosis to eternal life was a feat that all deceased hoped to duplicate.

BOOK OF THE DEAD 6 A four-column inscription above the queen describes "the presentation of offerings [iabet] to her father, Osiris, the great god, by his daughter, king's great wife, mistress of the two lands, Nefertari, beloved of Mut, justified."

Nine columns of text over the altar and facing away from Osiris summarize his intention of giving Nefertari "the appearance of Re' in heaven, all infinity with him, all eternity with him, and all joy with him. Osiris, who resides in the West, Wen-nefer, king of the living, the great god, ruler of the sacred land, lord of eternity, ruler of infinity."



The south and part of the west walls of Chamber G. The seven cows and the bull are addressing Nefertari on the adjacent wall.

The next scene occupies the entire south wall and, for lack of space, continues onto the southern portion of the west wall. It is an evocation of Chapter 148 of the Book of the Dead. Beneath a sky sign and framed by was scepters at either end are four cows in the upper register, three cows and one bull in the middle. In front of each is a small altar with offerings of vegetables, milk, and bread.

The animals are meant to address Nefertari, who has been placed on the adjoining wall for lack of space. Each cow

is distinguished by its hide and a particular legend above. The text of Chapter 148 reveals that these seven cows have the power to provide the spirit of the dead queen with the necessities we see displayed: milk, bread, and vegetables.

In the same spell, there are references to steering oars that help the deceased maneuver among the stars. With Re' serving as the queen's helmsman and the oars guiding her pilgrimage, none of Nefertari's enemies will know or even recognize her—so the text promises. Each oar is named and linked with a compass direction.



The cow and oar images exist for the benefit of Nefertari who has been relegated to the adjacent wall, where she stands with arms raised in adoration. Her lotus-bud earring is particularly splendid, and the modeling of the flesh of her neck with three painted strokes is remarkable. No words are actually ascribed to the queen; but presumably she utters the invocation that is an integral part of Chapter 148, a request that the cows provide her sustenance.

Like an enormous punctuation mark, a broad, raised band of relief severs the

previous scene from the one immediately south of the doorway. This is a curious but theologically important grouping of a ram-headed mummiform figure standing on a small plinth.

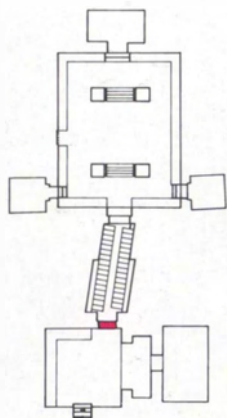
Between the ram's horns is a solar disk. The figure wears a broad collar and red sash. Ministering to him are Nephthys, to the left, and Isis, to the right. Each wears a bag wig (*afnet*) with long queue, kept in place by a red *fillet*, and a tight, red sheath dress. The dresses are held in place with shoulder straps that expose the goddesses' breasts. The scene takes place beneath the sky sign and is framed by the vertical band to the left and a *was* scepter along the door jamb.

The ram-headed god is identified as Re'. Between the goddesses and his mummiform figure are two bands of text. The left avers: "It is Osiris who sets as Re'" The right: "It is Re' who sets as Osiris."

Egyptian theologians are here declaring that Re' and Osiris are profoundly intertwined. Yet this is not an obvious alliance, since Osiris represents the *chthonian*, earth-bound cults that seem to stand in opposition to solar imagery. The polarity can be expressed in countless ways: night versus day, earth versus sun, and so forth. Such fusing of the qualities and traits of Egyptian gods—a practice known as "syncretism"—occurs often. Re' represents the expiring sun ready to begin once more the nighttime journey into the realm of the dead, Osiris' kingdom, so thrusting the two gods into partnership.

The scene is well preserved and a superb example of balanced draftsmanship and excellent execution. Over the door is the tutelary image of Nekhbet with *shen* signs in her talons.

Doorway to the Descending Corridor



The descent leading from Chamber C is off axis, shifted appreciably right. In the absence of any obvious structural reason for this, perhaps the architects were trying to introduce an unexpected twist, in imitation of the “crookedness of the beyond.” This impression is further heightened by a skewing to the right of the descent passage itself.

The door jamb marking the entryway to the descent proclaims the queen’s formal name in outsized hieroglyphs. The passage-way has two widths: a narrow, outer thickness and a wide, inner one.⁷

The right outer thickness shows a rampant serpent facing the queen’s cartouche, which is surmounted by double plumes and a solar disk and rests on the hieroglyph for gold. The serpent wears the red crown of Lower Egypt and is identified as Edjo, the cobra goddess. A *kheker* frieze and sky sign define the upper boundary of the composition and a fancy woven basket the lower. Twin *djed* pillars support the entire scene beneath. Considerable paint and plaster have been lost along the right-hand edge.

The corresponding left-hand scene is almost identical. Omitted is the serpent’s name; but since it wears the double crown of united Egypt, we assume it is Nekhbet.

The inner thickness at the head of the stairs is exceptionally interesting. Opposed serpents representing Nekhbet and Edjo shield the queen’s cartouche. The whole design is balanced on a woven basket. Underneath, on the left, is a tub of lilies, heraldic plant of Upper Egypt; on the right, a tub of papyrus, heraldic plant of Lower Egypt. This pairing symbolically establishes the mythic orientation of the tomb: south (Upper Egypt) is to our left, and north (Lower Egypt) to our right. Straight ahead, therefore, is the “west,” the domain of the dead.

Looking down the descending corridor to the burial chamber from Chamber C, 1904.

Photo: Courtesy of the Museo Egizio, Turin.

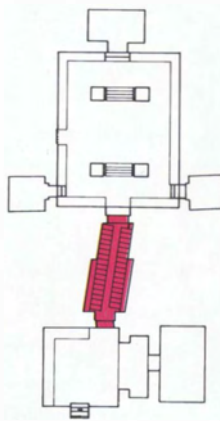
⁷ Here, Nefertari is called “the hereditary noblewoman, great of favor, the Osiris, king’s great wife, mistress of the two lands, Nefertari, beloved of Mut, justified.”







Ma'at, Serket, and Hathor on the east side of the descending corridor. Ma'at encircles Nefertari's cartouche with her outstretched wings.



The Descending Corridor

The second descent leads to the sarcophagus hall. The stairway is 7.5 meters long and drops nearly 3 meters over the course of eighteen steps. Down the midline runs a slip way for the sarcophagus.

The walls of this corridor form a parallelogram divided into two triangles whose long sides are actually a continuation of the floor level in Chamber C. Despite the awkward surfaces produced, not even the smallest area has been left undecorated. On each side is a narrow shelf about 4.5 meters in length and at the same level as the floor of Chamber C. Although the text and decoration offer no clue to its use, it could have served to hold ritual material or funerary furnishings.

The decoration in the upper triangles, those areas that lie above an imaginary plane extending out from the floor level of

Chamber C, is very much in keeping with what we have already seen. On the left, the queen presents two globular jars (*nemset* jars) held above an altar charged with fruit, vegetables, cuts of meat, and loaves of bread. Two smoking braziers perch on top. Beneath this cornucopia are a water jug and what may be a lettuce, an obscure reference to the god Amun. Wedged in are protective symbols denoting "protection, life, stability, dominion, all health, all joy, all protection like Re."

There to receive the queen's offerings are three goddesses: Isis; her sister, Nephthys; and Ma'at, squatting with outstretched wings. The sisters are seated on imbricated throne bases, but only Isis wears a beaded dress. Nephthys is clothed far more simply in a green ankle-length shift. Ma'at is shown in a red dress, her green wings extended to shield the queen's cartouche. Next to it, a *shen* ring reminds us that the cartouche derives from a modified *shen* sign. Behind Ma'at and set apart from the scene by a narrow painted band is a partial titulary of the queen: "king's great wife, Nefertari, beloved of Mut."

Turning to the right, we find a nearly identical composition. Again, the queen presents two *nemset* jars, while two braziers blaze on an altar well laden with produce and bread but no meats. A more extensive version of Nefertari's name and titles is supplied in four columns of text just above her head. In the interest of presenting a more complete titulary, the artist had to forego Nefertari's tall, plumed ornament. A selection of amuletic devices fills out the composition.⁸

The recipients of Nefertari's largesse are a local form of Hathor, "she who is chief in Thebes," Serket, the scorpion goddess, and Ma'at. Both Hathor and Serket wear tight-fitting, ankle-length dresses with shoulder straps that expose their breasts.



Detail of Serket, crowned with a scorpion, in the descending corridor.

BOOK OF THE DEAD 8 Here, the queen is called "king's great wife, mistress of the two lands, possessor of charm, sweetness, and love, lady of Upper and Lower Egypt, the Osiris, Nefertari, beloved of Mut, justified before Osiris who resides in the West."

But Hathor's green costume pales beside Serket's red, beaded dress.

Here, the cartouche behind Ma'at integrates well into the body of the text and does not seem an afterthought. All in all, the right-hand panel seems more carefully conceived and executed than the left. At the very least, the rhythmic alteration of color in the dresses introduces welcome variation. It is tempting to think that these differences reflect the work styles of two distinct artisan crews, the "right" crew a bit sharper aesthetically than their fellows across the corridor.

At the near end of each shelf (south thickness) is a representation of Serket (left) and Neith (right), similar to the door thicknesses of the recess upstairs. Only minor differences occur in dress and text. Amulets fill the space behind Serket. On the right thickness stands Neith, wearing

nemset a globular jar used in rituals



anklets in this instance. A row of amulets stands behind her.

At the far end of each shelf (north thickness) is a diminutive version of a *djed* pillar with two arms, each holding a *was* scepter. With the roof shelving rapidly downward, these *djed* pillars take on the aspect of squat, powerful braces supporting the roof.

The decoration on the lower portion of the descent contrasts starkly with what we have just seen. It is explicitly funerary and abounds with references to the netherworld. This is quite intentional, as we are for the first time literally passing below the floor level of the upper tomb. Henceforth, our progress is below ground in the figurative sense as well.

Except for minor variations, prompted mostly by spatial considerations, the decor on right and left walls is symmetrical. The left wall shows Anubis reclining on a shrine and Isis kneeling on the hieroglyph for gold. They make lengthy addresses to Nefertari. The black jackal god Anubis has a sash around his neck and a flail tucked behind his right haunch. The shrine is topped with a cavetto cornice and has a single door on its broad face.

Anubis makes two addresses, distinguishable by the different sizes of the hieroglyphs used. The first consists of twenty-nine vertical columns of increasing length that read from left to right.

Immediately following, in slightly larger script, is a second address to the queen.^{9/10}

A horizontal line at the base of each column separates these texts from those of

Looking back up the descending corridor toward Chamber C. The goddess Neith is on the south wall.

BOOK OF THE DEAD

9 The first statement: "Words spoken by Anubis *Imy-wt* [he who is in (his) cerecloth], the great god who resides in the sacred land. I have come before thee, [oh] king's great wife, mistress of the two lands, lady of Upper and Lower Egypt, the Osiris, king's great wife, Nefertari, beloved of Mut, justified before Osiris, the great god who resides in the West. I have come before thee, and I have given thee a place that is in the sacred land, that thou mayest appear gloriously in heaven like thy father Re'. Accept thou the ornaments upon thy head. Isis and Nephthys have endowed thee and have created thy beauty like thy father, that thou mayest appear gloriously in heaven like Re', and so that thou mayest illumine Igeret with thy beams. The great assembly of gods on earth makes a place for thee. Nut, thy mother, greets thee just as she did Re'-Horakhty. May the souls of Pe and Buto make jubilation as [they did] for thy father who resides in the West. The great assembly of gods who are on

[earth], they shall be the protection of thy limbs. Approach thy mother, that thou mayest sit upon the throne of Osiris. May the lords of the sacred land receive thee. May thy heart be forever joyous, [oh] king's great wife, mistress of the two lands, lady of all lands, Nefertari, beloved of Mut, justified before Osiris who resides in the West."

10 The second statement: "Words spoken by Anubis *Imy-wt*, the great god, lord of Ra-Stau [the necropolis]. I have come before thee, beloved daughter, king's great wife, mistress of the two lands, Nefertari, beloved of Mut, justified, and I have given [thee] the appearance of Re' in heaven that thou mayest sit upon the throne of Osiris. Approach thy mother, Isis, and also Nephthys. The great assembly of gods is [thy] protection forever and ever."



11 The first speech:

"Words spoken by the great Isis, the god's mother, lady of heaven, mistress of all gods, who dwells in the sacred land. I have come before thee, king's great wife, mistress of the two lands, lady of Upper and Lower Egypt, the Osiris, mistress of the two lands, Nefertari, beloved of Mut, justified before Osiris, the great god, the lord of eternity. I have given thee a place in the sacred land in the presence of Wen-nefer. May thou appear gloriously like the Aten in heaven forever."

Mention of the Aten at this time might have been fraught with meaning since the term was deeply implicated in the religious innovations of Akhenaten. But it is also the standard word for the sun's radiant disk and so occurs very early in Egyptian religious texts. In the context of a tomb already rich in solar imagery, its appearance here is not surprising.

12 The second speech:

"Words spoken with Isis, great mother, mistress of heaven, lady of all the gods. I have come before thee, great royal wife, mistress of the two lands, lady of Upper and lower Egypt, Osiris, Nefertari, beloved of Mut, justified before Osiris who resides in the West, the great god, lord of eternity. I have given thee a place in the necropolis so that thou mayest appear gloriously in heaven like thy father Re'. Igeret is illumined by thy beams."

The lower west side of the descending corridor. Anubis is depicted as a jackal recumbent on a shrine. Above him, a winged cobra protects the cartouche of Nefertari.

Isis, whom we see at the right. She is clothed in a red dress with shoulder straps and a white bag wig secured by a red fillet. Her iconographic signature is firmly atop her head. As she kneels forward, she places her hands above a *shen* sign. An outsize, highly detailed version of the hieroglyph for gold buoys her up. Beginning at the far left, in thirteen columns, Isis delivers the first of two speeches. In larger script, the second speech continues in ten columns.^{11/12}

These scenes are duplicated on the right-hand wall of the descending corridor, except for minor adjustments in layout and text. The principal change is that, in place of Isis, it is now her sister, Nephthys, who kneels beneath Anubis. Considerable surface losses have obliterated much of Nephthys' speech.

Just beyond this, in the small triangle formed by the descending roof line and the scenes below, is a winged, coiled serpent with a *shen* sign around its stippled body and another just in front of the queen's cartouche. This elaborate monograph serves to defend the queen's person by vigorously protecting her name. The legend near the serpent's tail confirms: "She confers all life, stability, dominion like Re."

At the very base of the stair and marking the passageway to the sarcophagus hall is a monumental door frame. Its jambs are decorated in outsize hieroglyphs presenting the name and titles of the queen. Although superficially similar to the upper door jambs, here, significantly, the queen is identified first and foremost as "the Osiris," an acknowledgement of her transformed state.

The generous proportions and clarity of these hieroglyphs are exceptionally beautiful. Above them is a striking figure of Ma'at, who faces left with her left knee drawn up for support. The lintel text reads "words spoken by Ma'at, daughter of Re' (I) protect (my) daughter, the king's great wife, Nefertari, beloved of Mut, justified."

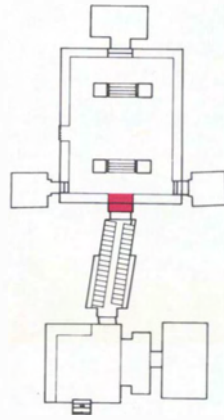
In this scene, it is easy to appreciate how deeply intertwined are Egyptian writing and art. Note that the head of Ma'at intrudes into the writing field precisely

where Egyptian grammar requires a first person pronoun. Yet no such pronoun has been written; rather, Ma'at herself performs the task. This door frame is a masterpiece of calligraphy.

Isis, kneeling on the symbol for gold, rolls the sun disk, near the bottom of the west side of the descending corridor.



Door Reveal to the Sarcophagus Chamber



The little passageway to the burial chamber, like the one above, is waisted; it has a narrow outer dimension and wider inner dimension. The outer thicknesses are decorated identically, or nearly so. Figures of Ma'at, with the feather of truth tucked into her headband, welcome the queen.

The inner thicknesses reassert the mythic orientation of the tomb by featuring Nekhbet, the serpent of Upper Egypt (south), on the left and Edjo of Lower Egypt (north) on the right. Nekhbet wears an *atef* crown and Edjo the double crown. We proceed "west," into the netherworld.

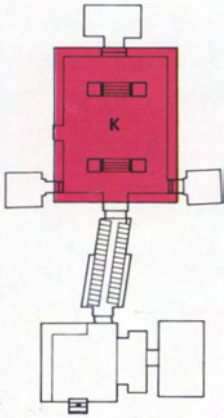


Nekhbet, wearing the two-feathered atef crown, on the west side of the passageway to the burial chamber.

Opposite: The entrance to the sarcophagus chamber. Ma'at with wings outstretched welcomes Nefertari from the lintel.



Chamber K

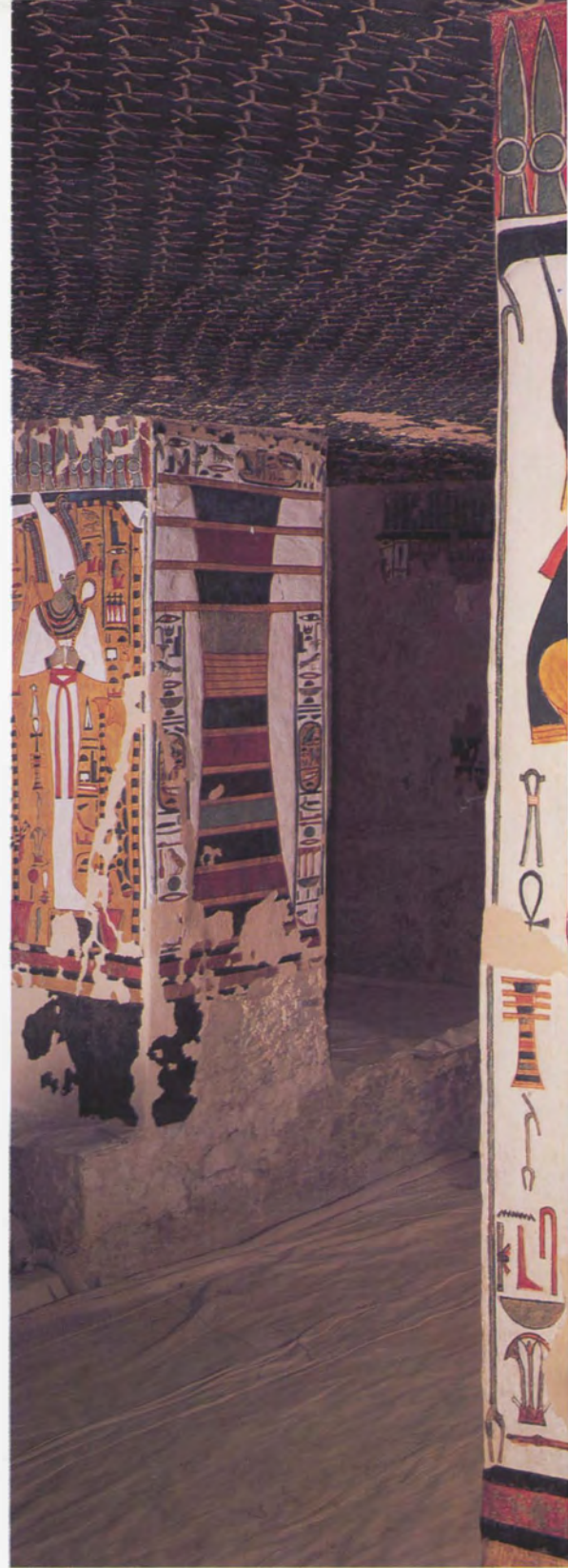


The dimensions of the sarcophagus chamber (Chamber K) are 10.4 meters deep by 8.2 meters wide. A low bench, probably another place to put funerary equipment, runs along the chamber's perimeter. From the scanty bits of inscription still adhering to the ends of the bench, we can discern mention of the queen as an Osiris.

Above the bench, the walls of the chamber are decorated with long scenes forming, with one exception, an integrated composition. The left side of the chamber provides illustrations and texts from Chapter 144 of the Book of the Dead; the right side, illustrations and texts from Chapter 146. Each is a description of the domain of Osiris.

The queen here demonstrates her profound knowledge of this secret realm by naming the doors and their attendants, so documenting her fitness to reside with the immortals. Chapter 144 describes the gates and Chapter 146 the portals of this world. Framing the compositions are a stippled band, *kheker* frieze and sky sign above, alternating bands of red and yellow ochre below.

View looking north-east into Chamber K. On the west face of Pillar 1, Nefertari is welcomed by Hathor of Thebes.







Left/West Side of Chamber K

The composition begins on the south wall, west section, with a magisterial full-length view of the queen, who lifts her hands in adoration before a trio of formidable *demiurges*. She is dressed in a white full-length pleated robe and her crown of choice. Her name and titles fill two columns immediately in front of her. A broad expanse of variegated hieroglyphs separates the queen from the first gate and its attending genii.

There are seven gates in Osiris' realm; five of which are here described and illustrated. Throughout the composition, the order remains constant: text first, gate second, attendants third. Each gate is composed of an ochre surround and a red door. By Egyptian color conventions, this is shorthand for wood. The three attendants at any single gate are its keeper, guardian, and announcer. This trio is invariably composed of three anthropomorphic gods, the first ram-headed, the second animal-headed, the third human-headed. The first figure is always male. Each carries particular attributes: a leafy sprig, a knife, an *ankh* sign. Yet there is no obvious correspondence between their names and their representations.

By enunciating their names, the queen demonstrates her power over these potential adversaries. She may then approach the gate, recite a prayer, and pass on to the next.¹³

The first gate scene forms too large a composition to fit entirely on the south wall, and so portions of it had to be carried over onto the west. The balance of the scene, the door and guardians, ends precisely at the left door jamb of the small annex (Chamber M).

With the right jamb begins the text for the second gate, the best preserved of the five. Its seventeen lines—in reverse order as they are in the first gate—are well preserved and thoroughly legible.¹⁴

*Opposite:
Nefertari with her
hands raised in prayer
on the west side of
the south wall of
Chamber K.*

demiurge a lesser god, subordinate to greater divine beings or to a supreme deity

BOOK OF THE DEAD

13 At the first gate, Nefertari intones:
"The first gate. The name of its keeper [is] 'downward of face, numerous of forms'; the name of its guard is 'the burning of ear' [eavesdropper], and the name of its announcer is 'penetrating of voice' [loud]."

14 At the second:
"Second gate. The name of its keeper [is] 'he who opens their foreheads.' The name of its guardian, 'virtuous of countenance.' The name of its announcer is 'Imsus' [the burner?]."

After appropriate identification is provided, Nefertari speaks: "Do not be weary when the old ones justify the living secrets anew in their years. The Osiris, the king's great wife, mistress of the two lands, Nefertari, justified before Osiris, rich in offerings of the moment, who makes his [sic] way with a flame, who defeats foes. The Osiris, the king's great

wife, mistress of the two lands, Nefertari, beloved of Mut.

I have prepared a path. May you permit me to pass. Protect me that I may see Re' traverse it among those who make offerings to the Osiris, the king's great wife, mistress of the two lands, Nefertari, beloved of Mut, justified.

I have prepared a path that you might let me pass. Protect me, in order that I may see Re' traverse it."

Again, improper use of masculine parts of speech in reference to the queen is simply a grammatical lapse by the copyist.

The meaning of the text is opaque; but its vignette, one of the best preserved in the sarcophagus chamber, is clear. A male god with ram's head is the keeper, a lioness with twin snakes sprouting from her head is the guardian, and the announcer is a male deity. The males wear green vests held in place with shoulder straps and a knot of Isis at the navel. They have ruddy skin while the female god has a light complexion. This distinction between male and female skin tones is a common convention.

The text and vignette of the third gate have suffered quite substantial losses but from vestiges of text and outside sources, the names of the three attending gods are recoverable.¹⁵

Note that the texts of Gate Three and subsequent gates appear in normal order. They are no longer reversed. This reorientation of hieroglyphs is not observable on the opposite side of the burial chamber.

It may be significant that we have just reached the mid-point of the chamber, directly above the niche for the canopic chest, where the queen's embalmed viscera were stored and where the foot of her sarcophagus once rested. This point is the architectural and religious focus of the tomb; so the hieroglyphs have been adjusted to focus our attention on this central verity: the queen's sarcophagus.

The entire text and doorway constituting the fourth gate is obliterated, up to the northwest corner of the room. Its triad of gods appears on the north wall, facing our left. They are damaged; but enough remains to verify that these were male deities: ram-, antelope-, and human-headed.

The fifth gate's text and illustration follow. For want of space, however, the artist had to reduce the usual complement of door attendants to the ram-headed keeper alone. Nonetheless, the names of all three are preserved.¹⁶

BOOK OF THE DEAD
15 At Gate Three, the doorkeeper is "the one who eats the excrement of his hinderparts"; the Guardian is "vigilant"; the announcer is "he who curses."

16 At Gate Five, the keeper is "he who eats snakes"; the guardian is "the burner"; the announcer is "Hippopotamus-faced, raging with power."

*Opposite:
The keeper, guardian,
and announcer for the
second gate on the
west wall, Chamber K.*





Right/East side of Chamber K

Chapter 146 of the Book of the Dead provides Nefertari with the means to pass successfully through the twenty-one portals of the domain of Osiris. As in Chapter 144, it is crucial that she possess knowledge and be able to name the portal and its keeper, who blocks her passage.

Of the twenty-one portals, only ten are mentioned in the tomb. Text and vignette are fully integrated, as they would have been in a funerary papyrus. Each section shows a stylized portal consisting of door jamb and *uraeus* frieze, within which squats the figure of the keeper. Though we cannot be sure, it is likely that all the keepers held knives; they are quite prepared to bar the queen’s way if necessary. The texts accompanying these illustrations are short, usually comprising only four or five vertical columns. They appear in reverse order throughout and always follow the illustration, the opposite of Chapter 144, on the facing wall.

The east wall of the chamber has endured considerable damage. Some sections are difficult to read and some have disappeared entirely. As before, the initial scene appears on the south wall.

Above the rock bench, the queen appears in a pleated white gown. Her hands are raised before the first portal and its vulture-headed keeper. Substantial loss of wall surface has reduced the text to fragments. Nefertari asserts that she has made no transgression along the path to the “west,” so justifying her arrival at this point in her journey.¹⁷

*Opposite:
The knife-wielding
doorkeeper for the
fifth portal on the
east wall of the burial
chamber.*



BOOK OF THE DEAD
17 From various sources, we can restore the first portal text. Its name is “Lady of fear, lofty of batlements, the destroyer, who wards off storms and who rescues the plundered.” The name of the keeper is “read.”

18 The first three columns, from left to right, provide the second portal’s name and its keeper: “Mistress of Heaven, lady of the two lands, she who licks [her calves], mistress of all mankind, who numbers [men].” The doorkeeper is “who fashions [the end].”

At the wall juncture is the second portal, whose keeper has the head of a mouse. The two columns of text behind belong to the inscription on the adjacent wall, between the entryway to the eastern annex and the wall juncture.¹⁸ Curiously, the artist has immediately duplicated the second portal text to fill the corner juncture and the small space behind the mouse-headed doorkeeper. Such replications — or dittographies — are not uncommon and seem to act as space fillers.

Stepping across the annex opening, we approach the third portal and its keeper, a crocodile clutching a large knife. The vestigial text identifies the portal as “mistress of altars, great of offerings, who pleases every god on the day of faring upstream to Abydos.” This reference encapsulates the wish of every Egyptian to make — either in fact or symbolically — a waterborne journey to Abydos, the traditional home of Osiris. The name of the doorkeeper is “the brightener, friend of the great god who sails to Abydos.”

The keepers for the third, fourth, and fifth portals on the east wall of Chamber K. The text pertaining to each of the portals follows the representation.

*Following page:
The north wall of Chamber K. Anubis, the god of embalming, Hathor, the funerary goddess, and Osiris, mummified, receive adoration from Nefertari.*



The fourth portal has a bull as its keeper. The name of the keeper is "the long-horned bull," providing in this one instance a satisfying correspondence between the keeper's name and face.¹⁹

Perhaps the oddest figure in this panorama of the inhabitants of Osiris' realm is the doorkeeper for the fifth portal: a nude, squatting child with distended cranium. He wields two knives, which he carries crossed in front of him. The artist, perhaps feeling a need to expand the interval between this portal and the following, has duplicated the last one-and-a-half columns of text, another instance of dittography.²⁰

Portals Six through Eight occupy the north half of the east wall and are badly defaced. We can discern the serpent-headed keeper of the sixth portal, but both its name and the keeper's have vanished. Portal Seven is all but obliterated.²¹

Only the *kheker* frieze and a band of rampant *uraei* remain from the eighth portal. Of its text, only two words remain. One word is, however, diagnostic (*mty*: "engenderer"), suggesting that the artist placed the ninth portal text with the eighth portal, so compounding his earlier mistake. Perhaps the copy book was defective at this point. Of the ninth portal, its keeper, or identifying legend, no trace remains.

The tenth and final portal appears on the north wall of the sarcophagus hall. Rather better preserved than the previous three, this portal is clearly guarded by a crocodile-headed keeper.²²

Following immediately, a large composition occupies the rest of the north wall and ends at the doorway to the northern annex. It shows the queen rendering homage to three seated gods. The queen faces to our left, while the three seated gods face right. They are Osiris, Hathor, and Anubis.



BOOK OF THE DEAD

19 The fourth portal's name is "*mighty of knives, lady of the two lands, destroyer of the enemies of the weary of heart, who is wise and free of wrongdoing.*"

20 The fifth portal is identified as "*mistress of lower Egypt, the joyful, for whom one makes requests without entering in*

against her." The doorkeeper is "*who commands the opponent.*"

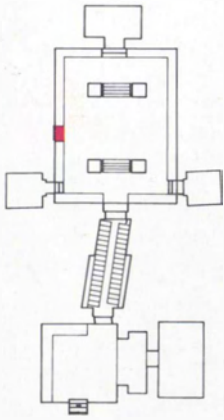
21 The text associated with Portal Seven is mistakenly drawn from Portal Eight. Nearly half of it survives, permitting us to reconstruct a part of its name as "*the kindler of flames, who is hot, slayer of . . . grinder of those who do not . . .*" The doorkeeper is "*who protects his body.*"

22 The tenth portal is called "*Loud of voice, who awakes with shouts, who laughs at dread [?], greatly esteemed, fearful for those within it.*" The name of the doorkeeper is "*the great embracer.*"

Osiris is shown mummiform, wearing the *atef* crown and carrying his usual regalia. Seated behind him, Hathor has on her head the symbol for the "west," to signify her association with the necropolis. Following her is the jackal-headed Anubis, god of embalming and Osiris' son by Nephthys.

The crocodile-headed keeper of the third portal. Chamber K, east wall.

The Canopic Niche



Descending a flight of four steps, we find ourselves in a depression that once held the queen's granite sarcophagus. From this vantage, the sides of the stone bench are readily visible. The plaster decoration has peeled off in most places, but enough remains to reconstruct in the mind's eye a decorative band of alternating pairs of *djed* pillars and *tyet* amulets, respectively evoking the memories of Osiris and of Isis.

Along the west wall, in the middle of the bench, a small niche has been cut. About one meter square, it probably held the canopic chest, a small coffer containing the queen's embalmed viscera. The niche is decorated on its three inner surfaces.

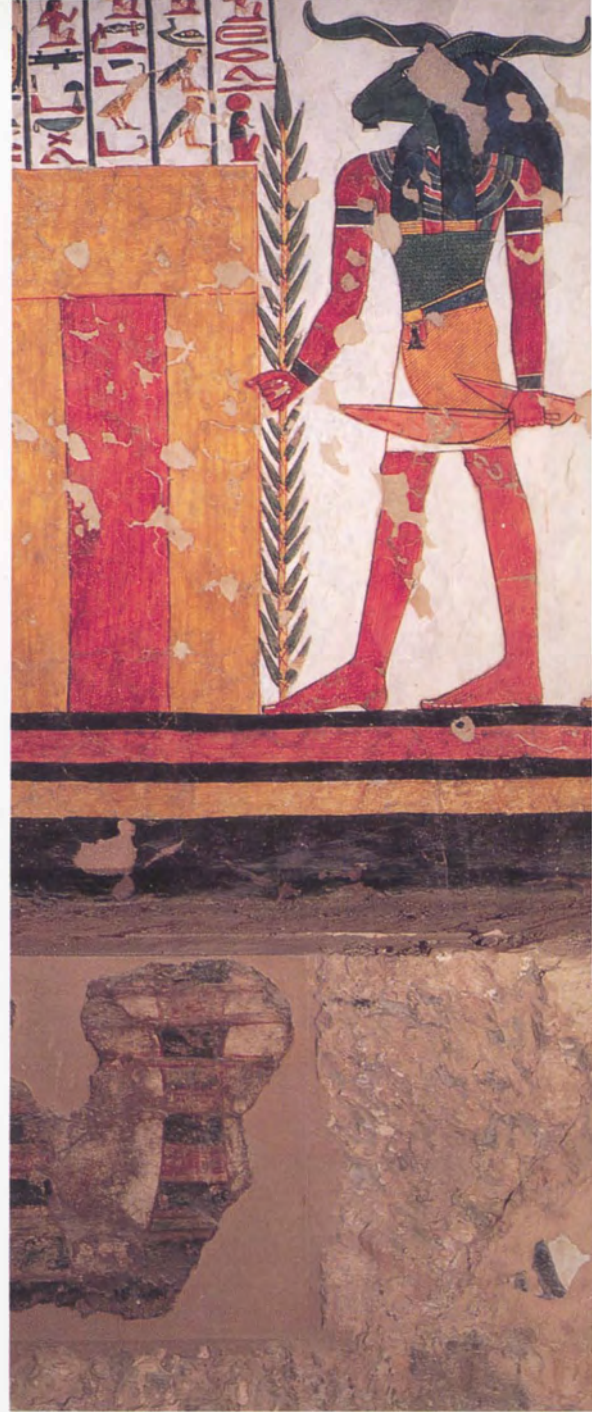
On the south (left) side, the decoration shows three mummiform figures: Imsety, Anubis, and Qebehsenef. The latter is shown with human head, even though he customarily was given a falcon head. Each is called "the great god."

At the back of the niche is an image of the winged goddess Nut, mother of Osiris and Isis. Her wings are at her sides, and in each hand she holds an *ankh* sign. Nut directs her words to the queen.

Less well preserved is the right side of the niche. It shows faint traces of three mummiform figures. Respectively, they bear baboon, jackal, and perhaps falcon heads. Also designated great gods, these are Hapy (baboon), Duamutef (jackal), and Anubis (falcon). The four genii in the niche are the sons of Horus, whose principal role in the funerary cult is to protect the queen's organs.

Note that the subdued treatment of these scenes contrasts sharply with the brilliant polychromy in the rest of the tomb. Instead of colorful sculpted plaster, here we find simple line drawings executed in yellow. The details of costume, done in yet darker yellow, stand out against the light yellow of the body.

tyet a kind of knot, a variation on the *ankh* symbol. The *tyet* knot is a sandal strap seen with the loops turned downward



The small niche cut into the west wall of the burial chamber probably held the canopic chest containing Nefertari's embalmed viscera.

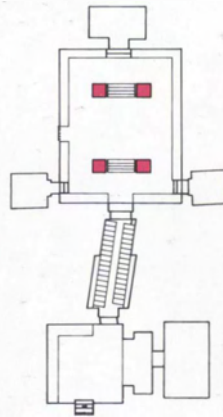
The style of the scenes in the niche suggest that the decoration was executed a generation after the tomb was closed.





dado a decorative band running around the base of a wall distinct from any scene above

The east face of Pillar 11 in Chamber K. The goddess Isis extends the ankh to the nose of Nefertari, giving her the breath of life.



The Pillars and Burial Depression

The placement of the actual sarcophagus in a shallow depression has architectural and religious significance. It focuses the eye and symbolizes the ground-based reality of death. The depth of the cutting is some 40 centimeters below the pavement.

The space is defined by four pillars, hewn from the living rock. Their inner faces are flush with the cutting and extend to the floor of the depression, so reinforcing their function as roof supports. They also serve as metaphors for the four supports holding aloft the canopy of the heavens.

The sixteen faces of these pillars form a body of work that is among the finest in the tomb. Their decoration is highly programmatic and sets out in detail certain key ideas. Each of the sixteen compositions on the pillar faces is framed by *kheker* friezes above a sky sign. *Was* scepters mark the edges, and a *dado* of red and yellow ochre marks the bottom.

The tomb's major and minor axes intersect between the pillars and are rigorously defined by the decoration. On the inner column faces of the minor axis (west-east) are *djed* pillars. On the inner column faces of the major axis (north-south) are figures of Osiris facing south, toward the tomb entrance. He is thus looking from the "west," waiting to welcome Nefertari into his sacred abode.

On the southern pillars, as if pointing the way to the central corridor between them, are images of the Iunmutef Priest (left) and Horendotes, the "avenger of his father" (right). The Iunmutef Priest is dressed in a splendid white kilt, broad collar, arm bands, and wristlets. His wig is kept in place by a fillet with golden *uraeus*.

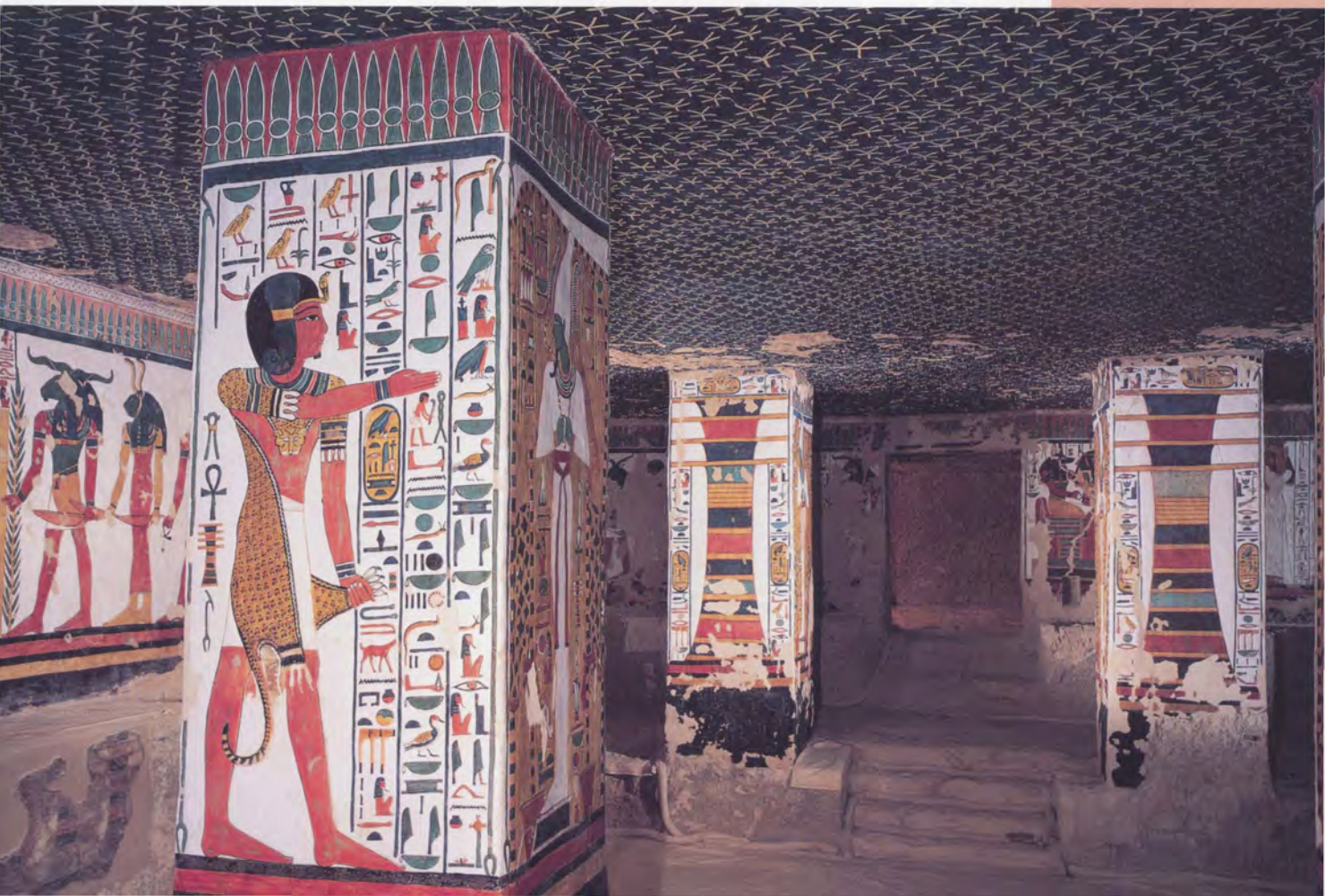
But the most sumptuous item of his apparel is the leopard skin slung over his right shoulder, the leopard's head resting upon his breast. This is the dress of an officiating priest. With his left hand, he holds the animal's left rear paw. With his right arm raised, he gestures to the avenue between the columns, urging that Osiris act on behalf of Nefertari. The priest's words, in six columns reading from right to left, are addressed to his father Osiris, who faces him on the adjacent pillar face.²³

One sign group occurs twice, at the bottom of Column Two and again, redundantly, at the top of Column Three. Amuletic devices behind the priest signify

protection, life, stability, and dominion. The Iunmutef Priest, literally "the pillar of his mother," represents the young Horus, who protected his mother Isis in her hour of need, so fulfilling the role of a dutiful son.

Looking northwest through the burial chamber. Horus appears on the south face of Pillar 1 in the form of Horendotes officiating as a priest.

BOOK OF THE DEAD 23 "Words spoken by Horus, the pillar of his mother (Iunmutef). I am thy beloved son, [oh] my father Osiris, I have come to greet thee. Four times forever have I beaten thy enemies for thee. Mayest thou cause thy beloved daughter, king's great wife, mistress of the two lands, Nefertari, beloved of Mut, justified, to rest within the assembly of great gods who are in the entourage of Osiris, whom all the lords of the sacred land join."



A similar chord is struck by the analogous composition on the southeast (right) pillar. The officiant, another priest, similarly dressed, his right hand raised in a gesture to mark his utterance, faces to our left. This priest is identified as Horendotes, “the avenger of his father,” who redressed the wrongs suffered by Osiris at the hands of his evil brother, Seth.

Horendotes’ words, also directed to a figure of Osiris on the adjacent pillar face, read in six columns from left to right. Behind this figure are the amuletic devices for protection, life, stability, dominion, all health, all his guarding.²⁴

Passing between the pillars, we encounter two of the four images of Osiris in the vicinity of the sarcophagus. The

compositions are nearly identical. Sheltered by a yellow kiosk with arched top, the mummiform Osiris stands on a low dais. Atop his head, the *atef* crown; in his crossed arms, the regalia of crook and flail. His skin is green. A red sash wraps around his waist. Either side of the dais is the Anubis fetish: a staff with leopard skin stuck in a mortar.

In both scenes, Osiris is identified as ruler of the assembly of gods. In a single column of text before each figure are Osiris’ promises to the queen. On the left, he gives her the appearance of Re’; on the right, he assures her a place in the sacred land.

Moving to the intersection of the avenues between the pillars, we see at a glance that the column faces all bear representations of the *djed* pillar, symbol of Osiris. But this figurative motif also serves to underscore the stone pillars as the literal supports of the roof above our heads. The *djed* columns are sized to fit exactly within the rectangle of the column face, their tops and margins defined by versions of the queen’s titulary. But for minor variations in spelling, these inscriptions are the same. The edge texts always point outward; while the upper text always faces inward, toward the sarcophagus.

Proceeding farther northward, we meet the second pair of Osiris figures, again facing the entrance of the tomb. Like the earlier two, these Osiris figures stand in yellow kiosks. Both are dressed as before and flanked by the Anubis fetish. On the left, Osiris is identified as King of Eternity; while on the right, he is called Lord of the Necropolis. Since death, like eternity, endures forever, these formulations are equivalent. Before Osiris, in a single column of text, is his promise to Nefertari: assurance of a place in the sacred land forever and ever.

Chamber K, the east face of Pillar IV.

Anubis, depicted as a standing man with a jackal head, has one hand on Nefertari’s shoulder.

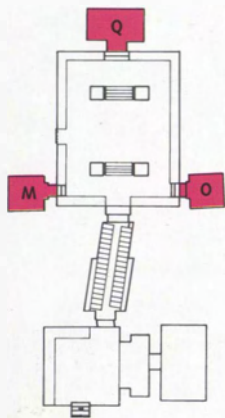


Once outside the area bounded by the pillars, we find that the decorations of their outer faces exhibit more variety. On each, the queen is welcomed by a protective god or goddess: thrice by Isis, twice by Hathor of Thebes, and once by Anubis. As ever, the queen wears her pleated white gown and broad golden collar. Her vulture cap head-dress is common to all images of Nefertari; but here it lacks the high, twin plumes, which could not be accommodated while still displaying the queen's titulary.

The north face of Pillar 111 in Chamber K, showing Nefertari with Hathor.



The Annexes (Not Open to the Public)



Three small rooms issue from the sarcophagus chamber: one to the west (Chamber M), another to the east (Chamber O), and a third to the north (Chamber Q). Their decoration has suffered badly. The east and west chambers are square, about the same size: 2.3 meters to the side. The northern annex is a rectangle of 3.6 x 2.1 meters.

Of the three, the decoration in Chamber M is best preserved and of real interest. The doorway is marked by images of the cobra goddesses of Upper and Lower Egypt. On the right is a serpent coiled upon a basket resting on twin *djed* pillars. She is identified as Nekhbet, yet wears the red crown of Lower Egypt. On the left, a similar scene; but of Edjo, wearing the double crown, red and white, of United Egypt. As Edjo should be wearing the red crown and Nekhbet the double, there is clearly some confusion here. On the door's inner thickness is space for a single column of text with the queen's titulary.²⁵

The inner face of the door frame has two scenes. On the left, to the north, Osiris, as the *djed* pillar, holds *was* scepters and has *ankh* signs on his wrists. The right scene, to the south, is much narrower and is the sole representation of the queen as a mummy. She is swathed in red, with wig, broad collar, and vulture cap.

The scenes on the left and right walls form a pair: the four sons of Horus, together with Isis and Nephthys, welcome the queen. In squatting posture, Imsety, Duamutef, and Isis are on the left. Hapi,

Qebhsenef, and Nephthys are on the right. The queen passes through this protective defile to reach the principal scene in Chamber M, on the back (west) wall, a curious depiction of the mythic home of Osiris in Abydos.

Enough of the scene survives to read it clearly: a wide booth or temporary structure erected on five supports, each bearing a column of text. In the shallow, gabled pediment above are opposed, undulating serpents whose protective wings meet in the center. In the intervals between the supports, from left to right, are Thoth, Anubis, Imsety, and again Thoth. In front of each, on a standard, is a symbol of the night sky. Each column of text is the utterance of one of these gods on Nefertari's behalf.

The eastern annex (Chamber O) is framed by a doorway decorated exactly like the one of Chamber M, except that the artist has now correctly linked Edjo with the red crown. The inner thickness also mentions the queen's titles. The panels either side of the inner door frame have *djed* pillars; but the left (south) panel is a symbolic representation of the queen, a complement to the image of her mummy in Chamber M.

The scenes in this chamber are less well preserved, but the queen is twice shown in adoration. On the left, she raises her arms in praise of Hathor, whose fragmentary image shows her in the aspect of a cow, mistress of the "west" and patron of the Necropolis. An altar graced with flowers separates the queen from the goddess.

On the right, the queen stands before enthroned images of Anubis and Isis. Another altar, this time laden with stylized loaves of bread, stands before the queen.

On the rear wall is a much-damaged image of Ma'at with outstretched wings, facing to our right. Enough remains of her utterance to the queen to proclaim that she has given Nefertari the lifetime of Re' and a place in the House of Amun, in other words, Karnak Temple. Perhaps a statue was erected there to the queen's memory.

The decoration in the north annex is largely obliterated. Paired serpents guard the door thicknesses. A solitary figure of Isis on the south wall is all that remains on the west side of the room, along with a small area of plaster bearing the queen's cartouche on the north wall. A vestigial procession of gods fills the right wall. Among them, we recognize Serket preceded by two male deities. An image of the *djed* pillar between two *tyet* knots, reminiscent of the decorative border around the sarcophagus chamber, takes up the south wall, east section.

25 The right is destroyed, but the left reads: "the Osiris, the king's great wife, mistress of the two lands, lady of Upper and Lower Egypt, Nefertari, beloved of Mut, justified before the great god."



Nefertari in mummified form in the southeast corner of Chamber M.





The present condition of the wall paintings in the tomb of Nefertari demonstrates the crucial work of the Getty Conservation Institute



in conservation and preservation of our common cultural heritage throughout the world.

In an age of ever increasing, ever less nourishing distractions, the world's cultural heritage provides spiritual sustenance for all humanity. Heritage links us to cultures of the past and enriches the times in which we live.

A world without a cultural memory, without the capacity to experience the authentic, the genuine, is a world profoundly deprived. Without our cultural heritage, we are like people without memory: we have no way of knowing where we came from, where we are going. We simply live inexplicable, incomprehensible, isolated moments.

The Getty Conservation Institute strives to preserve this heritage by undertaking collaborative conservation projects in countries as diverse as China, Ecuador, Tanzania, and the United States, always in partnership with host authorities. In the conservation of the tomb of Nefertari, the GCI worked with the Egyptian Antiquities Organization, since renamed the Supreme Council of Antiquities. The Council is responsible for some of the richest and most ancient cultural heritage sites in the world. In terms of sophistication, power, and enduring glory, the heritage of very few other nations can rival, much less surpass the splendor of Egyptian culture,



Close-up view showing salt crystals capable of prying the paint layer away from the plaster.

reflected in these majestic monuments. Moreover, in Egypt, further magnificent discoveries are even today being made.

The Council is committed to conserving and preserving this inestimably valuable cultural heritage on behalf of all the peoples of the world. That is one reason why the GCI first undertook the joint effort at the tomb of Nefertari. In all of its projects, the GCI seeks sustainability, where the collaborative conservation achieved will be maintained by its partners in the host country.

The issues of conservation of cultural heritage are complex, multifaceted ones that seldom lend themselves to simple or obvious solutions. Aside from the scientific and technical aspects of conservation in the management of heritage, multiple values must be weighed: cultural, spiritual, educational, interpretive, economic. For example, the revenue gained by admission of tourists to the tomb of Nefertari may accrue to the benefit of countless other Egyptian sites in need of conservation, maintenance, and management.

Yet, visitors pose a risk to the paintings in the tomb. After all, however lofty an aesthetic and cultural achievement, the tomb is basically a cave. A blind hole, with only one entrance/exit. Without sophisticated climate-control equipment, conditions inside the tomb are subject to extreme, abrupt alterations when visitors enter. Thus, a balance must be struck between the number of visitors allowed to enter the tomb and the economic benefit resulting from their entry, as well as the educational and aesthetic benefits derived by those who personally experience its splendor.

An exact replica of the tomb, a “virtual experience” museum in close proximity



Chamber K, east side of the south wall, showing the deterioration that occurred between 1904 (opposite) and 1989.

Photo opposite: Courtesy of the Museo Egizio, Turin.



Visitors waiting to enter the tomb after it was opened to the public in November 1995.

Photo: Shin Maekawa.



Detail from the east wall of Chamber K circa 1920 and 1989.

Top photo: Courtesy of the Museo Egizio, Turin.

to the actual tomb, could provide an alternative if tourist pressure becomes too great. Such a solution has met with great success at the site of fragile, paleolithic cave paintings in Lascaux, France.

Critical to finding the balance is continued monitoring of the environment within the tomb itself. The current system for climate control at the tomb of Nefertari — a tube and fan that serve to pump humid air out of the tomb and suck in external air — is rudimentary. The air introduced is unfiltered and from time to time may be laden with microscopic dust particles borne on the desert winds. These particles settle on the floor of the tomb, but also, over time, adhere to the walls, obscuring the brilliance of the painting.

The GCI is employing solar-powered sensors to ensure constant measurements. Without such constant and precise monitoring to direct decision-making, the risk of deterioration will not only remain, it will increase. Irreversible damage will certainly occur.

Damage by moisture, particularly the activation of salt leached from the limestone mother-rock and plaster of the tomb, is cumulative. At a certain point, such cumulative damage to the paintings reaches a point of no return. At that time, the only remaining option might be restoration. And restoration is fake.

By contrast, conservation deals with the authentic creation that yet remains. The conservators' art and science apply to these precious artifacts of our common cultural heritage only those methodologies that take the "patient" as it is. No one can rejuvenate it, re-create it, restore it. Even to try is sheer artifice.

Thus, to make successful use of all the potential values and (sometimes conflicting) benefits of a cultural heritage as

vast and rich as that of Egypt, it is essential that attention be concentrated also on management and custodianship. Only in this way can we be certain that a site is neither destroyed nor degraded in its authenticity.

Conservation of such treasures can be more than cost effective, provided that the management is properly undertaken and wisely administered. For example, display in the Egyptian Museum of pharaonic mummies, using GCI-designed, nitrogen-filled cases, has proven exceptionally successful. Today, the necessary mechanisms, techniques, site-management plans, and methodologies are available. Sometimes lacking are administrative and political will.

All these are aspects of the present and future that concern the GCI, as well as the Egyptian authorities. The past traumas of the tomb have been arrested. Together, we have managed to halt previously inexorable processes of destruction. Now the challenge is to maintain a healthy equilibrium, both in the tomb's environment and its visitor management. With the help of an informed and appreciative public, we pledge our best efforts to that task.

May the tomb of Nefertari yet endure for all eternity.

Neville Agnew
Associate Director, Programs
The Getty Conservation Institute

Nefertari on the west wall, south side of Chamber G.



Acknowledgments

This publication is the result of an exceptional team effort by the staffs of the Getty Conservation Institute, the J. Paul Getty Museum, and our consultants. The conservation of the wall paintings in the tomb took over six years. When the Supreme Council of Antiquities of Egypt decided to open to tomb to visitors, we felt it very important to contribute to a wider understanding of the significance of the tomb by those able to visit it as well as those who do not have the opportunity but still are interested in the subject.

John McDonald wrote the text, based on his extensive knowledge of ancient Egypt and of the tomb itself after a memorable visit with Getty staff. John Farrell edited the manuscript, structuring many parts to suit both the images and the organization of the book, and making the scholarly language of the text accessible to all readers. Neville Agnew, of the Getty Conservation Institute, supervised the book from start to finish and contributed his knowledge of conservation and of the tomb through invaluable suggestions. Chris Hudson, of the J. Paul Getty Museum, undertook this project with exceptional enthusiasm and superb professional skills. We are indebted to Mr. Hudson for his tenacity, vision, and focus.

Everyone will be able to better appreciate the beauty of the tomb thanks to the images produced mostly by Guillermo Aldana over his many years as photographer with the conservation team. The superb design comes from Vickie Karten who understands the needs for visual impact, aesthetics, and harmony. The publication would not have been at all possible were it not for Anita Keys who has relentlessly seen to it that photos, copy, production, and a myriad details all come together at the right time. Her perseverance is equaled by her good humor under pressure, creativity, and inventive management skills.

To all of them we are indebted.

Miguel Angel Corzo

Director

The Getty Conservation Institute

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Farouk Fawey el-Daewy



The 1904 discovery of Queen Nefertari's tomb revealed to the world the exquisite beauty of its magnificent paintings, which rank among the finest surviving masterpieces of ancient Egypt. Resealed again because of the decay and disintegration of its fragile images, the tomb remained hidden from the public until 1995 when a nine-year program of meticulous conservation and monitoring was completed.

John McDonald presents a complete guide to this "house of eternity," explaining the vignettes and texts that tell the story of Nefertari's final journey to immortality. He relates the meaning of the myths and funeral rites, shows how the royal tombs were built, and describes the life of Nefertari, whose timeless beauty now speaks to us again across a span of over three thousand years.


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