

The book concludes with a useful chronology of Mesopotamian and Egyptian kings and an appendix on the many versions and translations of 4 Ezra. The book also includes seven illustrations. Unfortunately, many of the black and white photographs are indistinct and hard to see—a surprising deficiency in a book series that focuses on the history of reception.

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The Decoration on the Cult Chapel Walls of the Old Kingdom Tombs at Giza: A New Approach to Their Interaction. BY LEO ROETEN. Culture & History of the Ancient Near East, vol. 70. Leiden: BRILL, 2014. Pp. lix + 436, illus. \$218.

Full disclosure: I have never been anything more than competent with mathematics, nor am I particularly comfortable with results displayed on a graph. So imagine my surprise when a study's hard-won conclusions are largely presented in that particular format. This is not a book for the faint-hearted, as the reader must get accustomed to acronyms such as CPSD ("Co-occurrence percentage surrounds discrepancy"), which is explained as "a calculated value giving the quantified difference between a CP [= "Co-occurrence percentage"] value and the CP values surrounding it in a table of CP values" (p. xiv). Given that such language is mostly impenetrable to me, I am happy to report that the author's thorough work has paid off with some rather interesting results, which are summarized in a concluding chapter that uses words exclusively. The author himself seems to be aware of the unconventionality of his approach, as he states that "[a]lthough some of the conclusions are so obvious that the employment of the methodology that has been developed may seem superfluous, the fact remains that the methodology adds a mathematical basis, thus making them more reliable" (p. lvi).

The book begins with a presentation of technical terms and abbreviations, followed by a general bibliography of works cited and a useful and up-to-date bibliography of the Giza tombs. After this comes a brief introduction followed by a numbered list of "(sub)themes" found on the chapel walls, such as the tomb owner standing or sitting alone (no. 1) or in the presence of his family (no. 2), personified estates bringing goods (no. 6) or servants also carrying goods or leading animals (no. 5), and so forth. Because these (sub)themes are often simply referred to by their numbers within the discussion of their occurrences and which (sub)themes surrounded them, the reader might wish to copy those three pages (lvii-lix) for easy consultation while reading the book.

Following this, chapter I presents the architectural and iconographic development of Giza mastabas and a discussion of the secular versus the non-secular content of the previously mentioned (sub)themes. This includes an examination of the difference between ritual and cult, where it is explained that cultic acts performed in the same order become a "ritual," and where the totality of the ceremonies carried out within the tomb chapels perforce became a ritual (p. 25). Next the terms "funerary" and "mortuary" are reviewed; the funerary ceremony, performed and represented as a standardized sequence of cultic acts, became a "ritual" (p. 26), and the expression "mortuary cult" applies to every aspect of the way the ancient Egyptians dealt with death and the dead (p. 27). This is followed by brief remarks on the decoration of the superstructure and the substructure of the tombs.

Chapter II presents the *raison-d'être* of the volume, which is to determine the cultic character as well as importance of the (sub)themes on the tomb's false door and west wall especially, whether these were subject to chronological developments, and what such changes indicate about the on-going provisioning of the deceased's *ka* by the individuals tasked with this responsibility. The methodology followed throughout the study is then revealed, followed by a description of the various catalogues of examples offered. These are dictated by the current condition of the chapel walls, and whether both the west wall and the false door are partly or completely present and decorated, or else only the false door or the west wall is, again, partly or completely present. As can be seen, the author is meticulous in his analysis of the evidence, which is what allows him to be so precise with his subsequent mathematical presentation throughout his study. Chapter III presents his methodology, which is predicated on statisti-

cal occurrences of the various (sub)themes, i.e., how often they occur, where they occur, what scenes precede or follow them, and so forth.

Chapters IV to VII examine the decorations on the west wall of the Giza cult chapels. These include occurrences and co-occurrences of the (sub)themes, their location, and the relationships between them. Detailed occurrences of the various (sub)themes are presented in graphs, and percentages of the combinations of these shown in additional charts. A more exhaustive catalogue would be hard to find. A similar presentation is repeated for the decorations on the false door (chapters VIII to XI), the entrance jambs and thicknesses (chapter XII), and the north, south, and east walls (chapters XIII, XIV, and XV, respectively). Chapter XVI then presents the interaction of all these (sub)themes on the various walls, with more scrupulous statistical analyses of their frequency of occurrences, co-occurrences, deviations within the frequency of occurrences, and so forth.

Chapter XVII brings all of this material together in a lucid and discerning presentation of the author's conclusions. As he sees it, the realization by the elite tomb owners that the provisioning of their *ka* might not last forever led to a diminishing faith in the continuity of the daily offerings, which occasioned a gradual increase of scenes that were considered to be helpful in guaranteeing the food supply on a non-active basis (p. 336). Thus, such (sub)themes as no. 10 (piles of food) and no. 11 (the non-ideographic offering list) were used with greater frequency, as were images of food production such as butchering scenes (no. 9) and the depiction of the tomb owner sitting before a table of offerings, in the act of consuming food (nos. 3, 40, and 41; the first was placed on the west wall while the other two are found on the false door panel). Here, the author quite rightly stresses the importance of the dependence on what might be called "magic" in the whole process of supplying the deceased's *ka*, since even actual food deposited on an offering table had to be magically consumed by the *ka* after traversing the false door from the next to this world. As a corollary, this decreased faith led to fewer scenes showing the deceased as a living person on the west wall. As the author puts it succinctly, the themes on the west wall went from a "here" aspect to one of a "hereafter" (p. 339). The false door also saw some transformations. As the need for this magic increased, the offering list started to become so large that it had to be moved away from the panel and subsequently transferred to the west wall.

As for the north and south walls, these increasingly showed the non-professional aspect of the tomb owner's life, such as scenes showing him hunting in the marshes (no. 17). However, some of the (sub) themes on the east wall, such as the boat scene (no. 70), may have changed from indicating a daily life to a funereal one. Similarly, it is possible that the palanquin scene (no. 71) also had a funereal context, as the tomb owner may have been shown visiting and supervising the construction of his tomb. All these conclusions are then briefly summarized and discussed in two short overall examinations of all the decorated parts of the chapel at the end of the chapter.

Although not an easy read by any means, the book is clearly written and well worth persevering through all those charts and graphs. The author offers some keen observations that are firmly based on hard data, and for this he must be thanked.

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Triangular Landscapes: Environment, Society, and the State in the Nile Delta under Roman Rule. By KATHERINE BLOUIN. Oxford Studies on the Roman Economy. Oxford: OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2014. Pp. xxv + 429, illus. \$150.

This book is a revision of the author's Ph.D. dissertation. It begins by noting the "major reorganization of the Nile Delta" (p. 1) from seven branches to two over the course of the first millennium of this era. The major research questions—how did humans contribute to this process? how did it happen, and why did it happen when it did? how did it impact the Delta communities?—prepare us for a mere hydrographical study.