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Lived Ancient Religion (LAR)

- 1 For modern cultures the multiplicity of approaches individuals show towards religion in everyday practice is widely accepted and is summarised as ‘lived religion’.² Perhaps less accepted is this idea may apply to ancient people as they may not have absolutely followed a fixed set of rules. In order to challenge this idea of an ancient ‘homo religiosus’, Jörg Rüpke initiated the LAR-approach in the eponymous ERC-Advanced Grant Project, which suggested “a set of experiences, of practices addressed to, and conceptions of the divine, which are appropriated, expressed, and shared by individuals in diverse social spaces”.³ Space thus plays an integral role in lived religion, “the primary space of the house and familial interaction (including familial funeral space), the secondary space of religious experience and interaction in voluntary or professional associations, the spaces shared by many individuals or groups in the public sites of sanctuaries or festival routes, and finally the virtual space of literary communication and the intellectual discourses formed therein”.⁴ Applying the LAR-approach it was demonstrated that religion also in Antiquity was a social field in which various authorities and traditions were constantly renegotiated depending on the context and situation in which the various individuals and groups interacted.⁵

Limitations of LAR

- 2 The Lived Ancient Religion (LAR) approach was thus an important first step to consider agency and appropriation in ancient cultures and to challenge the Classical and other Ancient Studies’ traditional focus on the rituals and symbols of the ‘official religion’. Crucially, with the LAR-approach attention moved away from the ‘normative’, towards

a more praxeological perspective of lived experience.⁶ However, it appeared that a narrower spatial focus on the ancient evidence would prove useful to fully understand the changeability of religion in everyday life of individuals and groups.⁷

The Walking Dead

- 3 With a nod to the popular American TV series, as well as to Michel de Certeau's 'Walking in the City',⁸ the Walking Dead approach presented here aims to include a spatial focus into the study of religious traditions in ancient cultures that was not fully explored in the LAR-approach.⁹ The first step in order to apply the Walking Dead approach is therefore the selection of a physical environment area, preferably utilized by individuals and groups over a longer period of time. For ancient Egypt, cemetery areas are interesting to study how people's religious actions changed over time, how they impacted on the physical environment, as well as how, in turn, the environment and earlier actions impacted the future choices and activities, because like today cemeteries were not only used as burial sites but used also for other religious practices often over centuries. Also not unimportant, the state of preservation of the material, pictorial and textual evidence from these areas provides a broad basis of evidence for an in-depth study. The case study in which the Walking Dead approach shall be tested is Saqqara, which was the cemetery of the city of Memphis situated about 20km south of the Great Pyramids of Giza, and which was used between c. 3000 BCE and the 4th century CE. The evidence from Saqqara includes built monuments in which deceased and gods were worshipped, and which are decorated with texts and images, a range of material evidence such as grave gifts, tomb stones or statues. The use of space includes building monuments and access roads, thereby emptying space or blocking access for new buildings, making choices for tomb location and decoration, but also various religious activities related to the funeral of the deceased, but also post-funerary visits by various visitors for the cult of the deceased, and other activities such as participation in divine processions and the like. For the main question of the Walking Dead approach of how traditions are being shaped, it is vital to consider Michel de Certeau's insight that there exist a range of possibilities of how individuals and groups operate in accordance to the respective situation and space.¹⁰ This means that roles of individuals and groups as subject to constant negotiation and in principle potentially fluid. Crucially, in the Walking Dead approach not only the living, but also the deceased are considered as actors. We shall see in the following that in the memorial cults at Saqqara, the deceased remained very much part of the world of living. In other words, the *dead* in ancient Egyptian perspectives were still *walking* around like De Certeau's agents, i.e. the necropolis was a lived space in which we see a "dialectic relation"¹¹ between humans, deceased and their surrounding space. The Walking Dead approach seeks to understand the behaviour of the living and the deceased and to scrutinize how freely (or constrained) individuals and groups could move within their (social) structure. Beside Certeau's concept of the everyday life, Anthony Giddens' structuration theory¹² combined with the Reckwitzian "artefact-space structuration"¹³ provide the conceptual foundations to understand the interaction of humans with artefacts and space and vice versa how artefacts and space impact on human interaction.

- 4 At Saqqara the ancient Egyptians built monumental tombs for themselves and their families in certain (assigned or chosen) spots, and they continued to go there after the burial or paid others to perform religious practices and commemorate their deceased ancestors. Besides, they were engaged in the worship of gods, or perhaps some were visiting the cemetery because it was expected behaviour at certain occasions. Agency in the cemetery of Saqqara is thus, for example, reflected in the way how and where people were buried (e.g. in a monumental tomb or a smaller tomb within the walls of their master's tomb), which tomb architecture and decoration schemes they chose (such as e.g. certain spells of the mortuary literature/the Book of the Dead, hymns to deities),¹⁴ and where they were buried (e.g. in proximity to an important person of higher or similar social status/profession).¹⁵ Saqqara provides an interesting case study because it offers the study of this variety of different aspects of agency over a relatively long period of time. The resulting 'terrain' of the space or physical environment being studied is conceptualized in the Walking Dead approach as *Cultural Geography*.¹⁶ The adjective, *Cultural* indicates that even though religious traditions and its change are the main interest of study, not all activity was necessarily religiously motivated (a caveat in fact also considered in the LAR-approach). *Geography* as a term acknowledging not only individual and group agency creating the physical environment but also how it influenced individual and group agency, in other words geography coins the mutual interaction of people and space being it's ever changing result. To arrive at the most comprehensive understanding of the dynamic interactions between people and space, three research perspectives are combined in the Walking Dead approach. These are (1) religious practices, (2) transmission of texts and images, and (3) landscape. Religious practices look at what people were doing and where, this is evident from archaeological evidence but can also be detected in the texts and images with which the tombs were decorated. Transmission also looks at the texts and images but from the perspective of the negotiation of written heritage (including images), which stories were being told, and how traditions were continued or newly invented. Landscape deals with the location of the tombs, but also how by building activities and blocking/renewing access roads the physical environment was changed by human interaction over time. The material evidence thus links the three perspectives which only together can fully illuminate how traditions may have changed and how a site's dynamic cultural geography was being shaped through the centuries. The claim of the Walking Dead approach is that practices, transmission, and landscape are three research perspectives which can be seen as the main vectors that allow to grasp religious change in the material, archaeological, epigraphical, and architectural record of Saqqara and that the approach may prove useful also to other sites. The importance of a closer consideration of artefacts and space, has in fact also been acknowledged by modern social theory.¹⁷ Vice versa the implementation of social theory to ancient society (which can only be studied from their material remains) as in the Walking Dead approach claims to provide additional historical depth to the understanding of human agency and structure.

The Walking Dead model: three vectors of agency shaping the Cultural Geography of Saqqara.



The Cultural Geography of Saqqara

- 5 The case study of the ongoing Walking Dead project is the Egyptian necropolis for the ancient city of Memphis. Saqqara is the modern village at the edge of the desert near Memphis and is situated about 30km south of Cairo on the West Bank of the Nile. Memphis was a centre that had major political and religious importance throughout Pharaonic history. Pharaohs as well as commoners chose to be buried at Saqqara, one of the cemeteries of the city of Memphis from Egypt's earliest dynasties onwards, resulting in the world's first monumental stone building (the Step Pyramid complex of king Djoser, c. 2600 BCE) and a myriad of other smaller, non-royal tombs.¹⁸ In the New Kingdom to the Late Period (c. 1500-332 BCE), Egyptian kings were buried elsewhere, but Saqqara remained an important cultic area and numerous monumental tombs, funerary temples and shrines were built there until the end of Egyptian pharaonic history (and after). The site had a range of different activities from building activities to cult maintenance, which involved individuals and groups of varying social status. Having served as a memorial site for non-royal individuals and kings, as well as a centre for the worship of gods and (royal/non-royal) ancestors for millennia, Saqqara not only provides chronological depth, but also the necessary thematic breadth to study its dynamic cultural geography. It is interesting how contemporary individual tomb owners looked at each other's monuments as well as being influenced by previous action and what that says about their religious traditions and *zeitgeist*.

Visiting the tombs

- 6 This article discusses mainly some monumental elite New Kingdom tombs (c. 1500-1100 BCE) located in the excavation area of the Leiden-Turin Expedition in Saqqara.¹⁹ Evidence from other New Kingdom areas such as the cemeteries near the Pyramid of Teti,²⁰ near the Bubasteion,²¹ or in the area of the excavations of Cairo University²² will be considered as part of the wider cultural geography of Memphis in the New Kingdom, to be further scrutinized in detail.²³
- 7 Egyptian elite tombs consisted of two parts. The deceased were mummified and buried in underground burial chambers, because achieving eternal life required an intact body. In addition grave gifts provided an eternal supply of food and drink for the afterlife. Aboveground, the accessible part of the tomb was formed by a decorated monument that marked the burial spot, its decoration was meant to identify the tomb owner(s) in image and text, and to provide a focal point for offerings and commemoration by hired staff and/or the extended social network of the deceased.²⁴ The walls of the aboveground structures were decorated with engraved limestone reliefs or wall paintings. This decoration commemorated the status of the tomb owners and/or represented certain ritual activities such as their burial or their veneration. That the tombs were meant to be visited is clear, for example, from the so-called ‘appeals to the living’, which are texts that address the visitors and ask them to recite offering prayers and/or to leave an offering in their tomb.²⁵ A tomb stela now in the Leiden National Museum of Antiquities provides a nice example of the wide range of people expected in the tombs such as professional necropolis staff, but also passers-by:

“O every overseer, every scribe, every purification priest, every lector priest, who shall pass by this tomb, may the primeval god, who emerged at the beginning of creation favour you, may you pass on your offices to your children after a very long life; so may you recite an invocation offering spell: An offering which the king gives consisting of 1000 of all good and pure things for the *ka*-soul of the priest and steward Meryptah, justified.”²⁶
- 8 The thousand of good and pure things stand in for eternal offerings necessary for survival in the afterlife. Surely, Meryptah also expected his extended family to visit his tomb although he does not mention them explicitly. That this was a common wish is suggested by other tomb inscriptions saying “may you hear the wishes of the children and servants of your house”.²⁷ Appeals to the living were relatively common in the ancient Egyptian tombs, and beside trying to motivate actual visitors perhaps they might also have served as magical ensurance of an enduring offering supply by means of perpetuation of religious practice in stone.²⁸ Some inscriptions are quite explicit where they expect the offering namely at the entrance of the tomb, where the texts usually appear,²⁹ or perhaps in front of the burial shaft, where offering pottery has recently been found.³⁰ It is very important, however, to distinguish clearly between offerings related to the funeral, such as the latter and the ongoing mortuary offering cult *after* the funeral. Maybe the best example for a mortuary offering cult was recently found in the tomb of the stonecutter Samut in Saqqara. Samut’s very small tomb seems to have had no monumental aboveground structure, but only a rectangular four-sided stela near his tomb shaft.³¹ The north side of this stela is decorated with a scene of the tree-goddess giving a libation offering to Samut, his wife Maia, and probably their daughter.³² Interestingly, three plates were found in the area directly in front of this representation which seem to be physical offerings corresponding to the religious

activity shown in the relief. These plates were found *in situ*,³³ i.e. the plates originally stood in an upright position in front of the north side of the stela. This is exciting since comparably remains of actual physical offerings survived only rarely in the New Kingdom tombs at Saqqara, but also because it provides physical evidence for a practice attested in representations in tombs and on stelae.³⁴ A more ancient part of the problem is the fact that most probably the offerings were often consumed by the living shortly after they were presented to the deceased, who had fed themselves on the scent of the offerings.

Tombs as auditive spaces

- 9 Lacking vast amounts of evidence for offerings makes it the more interesting to think even harder of ways how to detect the individual religious practices in the tombs. On path is to consider daily life in the tombs and think further about how we can envisage the practices performed. The now lost traces of offerings were probably accompanied by voicing the offering formula or a prayer, which again leave no trace in the archaeological record.³⁵ While ancient Egyptian oral culture is well-known, it was only recently that the consequences of the practice of reading/reciting texts *aloud* has fully been realized for Egyptian tombs. Conceptualizing Egyptian tombs as auditive spaces allows to focus attention of the optical and auditive interpretation of the image by the recipients.³⁶ What remains strangely absent, however, is a discussion of the recipients of the auditive spaces and the question of the 'hearers'.³⁷ Yet, since indeed the tomb should be considered as space for prayers, appeals and songs,³⁸ it is crucial to consider this potentially included less literate visitors who could hear and thereby participate into the prayers of the elite.³⁹ In addition, tombs should be seen as visual spaces. Representations could serve as emotional mementors (*Gedankenstütze*)⁴⁰ and a question to be further explored is in how far this applied to the ancient Egyptians.⁴¹ What is indicative of the idea that it did are perhaps short quotations of longer known abbreviated texts in the tomb decoration that might have served as *pars-pro-toto*.⁴²

Case study 1: Commemoration of others in the tomb of Tia & Tia

- 10 When considering tombs as auditive spaces that were visited by others it is important to consider the question of generic vs. non generic representation of people other than the tomb owner,⁴³ i.e. anonymous representations of individuals such as service personnel, queuing offering bearers or family members versus individuals that were clearly identifiable as actual persons by name and title and/or affiliation. Who was represented in a tomb was a conscious choice depending on the status of the owner and the story he or she wanted to tell. For example, the wetnurse of king Tutankhamun Maia, had apparently no interest to demonstrate her family relations in her tomb,⁴⁴ whereas in family complexes, these connections were naturally emphasised.⁴⁵ Other tomb owners such as Maya represented their colleagues in their tomb as offering bearers.⁴⁶ These scenes are usually understood in the benefit of the tomb owner receiving those offerings, but it is important to consider is that the benefits of representation and story-telling work both ways. Reciprocity is fundamental.⁴⁷ In return for the offerings the offering bearer receives the favour of the deceased, but by means of representation he became also inscribed into the memory of the tomb⁴⁸ and thereby gained both social and spiritual capital.⁴⁹ A nice example for multilayered

commemoration is attested in the tomb of a couple called Tia & Tia. A relief depicts the tomb owners on a boat trip on the Nile.⁵⁰ Martin suggested this scene may commemorate their sailing to (and perhaps also returning from) the temple of the god Osiris at Abydos, in which case it could be the commemoration of an actual religious practice the two Tias had performed in adoration of the god Osiris when they were still alive.⁵¹ This is a nice idea, however, difficult to prove and many sources for pilgrimages to Abydos are subject to debate.⁵² The direction of travelling has been discussed by Martin given a boat would either sail upstream (south) or rowed downstream (north), here, however, a combination of both directions is represented,⁵³ providing a nice example of how layers of information could be combined in Egyptian pictorial representations. At the front of the boat both tomb owners are depicted being presented with a large pile of offerings by a man. Further to the west, a large sailing boat is shown towing their bark. Nicely two horses are depicted so Tia & Tia may as well be on some leisurely voyage. The crew of the boat are also portrayed in action, ten rowers and five men climbing in the sail and mast, these figures are generic in the sense that they are interchangeable service staff performing their duties for the eternal benefit of the tomb owners. Yet others in the scene are tied into the commemoration of Tia & Tia as certain individuals are identifiable as actual persons when their name, title and/or affiliation is written beside a figure.⁵⁴ For example, on the boat of Tia & Tia, the scribe Iurudef is shown fixing the rope that fasts their boat to the larger one. This important task is thus performed by a named, identifiable individual, who could demonstrate his loyalty to the tomb owners by means of his representation. That Iurudef was in great favour of the two tomb owners is also demonstrated by the fact that he was allowed to build a small tomb-chapel in the outer forecourt of their tomb.⁵⁵ This duality of courtesy on part of the superiors and status gain though this courtesy on part of the inferior is a nice reflection of how patronage systems work.⁵⁶ This relief decoration discussed thus illuminates part of an ancient Egyptian social network, but at the same time is an important indicative of religious agency that Iurudef gained by means of representation.

Case study 2: Appropriating ancient traditions in the tomb of Tia & Tia

- 11 Perhaps not unexpectedly, if we compare the reliefs of contemporary tombs some iconographic details are so similar that scholars have wondered whether it might have been the same artists that decorated the tombs.⁵⁷ On the other hand, although the broader themes in contemporary tombs were often fairly similar, individual tomb owners also made different choices for specific texts or representations resulting in a range of variation in relief decoration at Saqqara. In order to understand the variations, it is therefore interesting to study the details found in the tomb decoration and compare them with contemporary and earlier tombs as well as within their wider known textual corpora including papyri. In addition content and style must be compared over a wider time period. The tomb of Tia & Tia dates to the reign of king Ramesses II (roughly 1200 BCE). The relief of their boat journey is also interesting in terms of style. The river on which the boat travels is represented with extensive water lines and different water plants. Animals such as fish and a crocodile are visible swimming in the river as well. Such a representation of plants and animals between the extensive waterlines is rather unusual in a New Kingdom tomb. These characteristics

are similar to the typical ‘marsh scenes’ found in a different type of tomb (known as mastabas) dating to the Old Kingdom (dating roughly 2500-2300 BCE).⁵⁸ The mastaba tombs with this typical scene predate Tia & Tia’s tomb by at least 1000 years. In this respect it is interesting that Tia & Tia’s tomb stands not only within eye-sight of Old Kingdom monuments such as the pyramid of king Djoser, mentioned above, but also located near many of the Old Kingdom mastaba tombs that show similar river representations. Some of which were still accessible in the New Kingdom in spite of the long time span that had passed. Though parallels can be found within the New Kingdom relief of Tia & Tia and the known Old Kingdom mastaba tomb reliefs,⁵⁹ the excavators of the tomb of Tia & Tia concluded that there were too many ‘inconsistencies’ with the ‘originals’ for it to have been copied from one of the surrounding Old Kingdom mastaba tombs. To be precise, the previous field director Geoffrey Martin wrote: *“What we cannot establish, however, is the artist’s perception of his relief: whether he realized its contradictions and accepted them from the outset, or whether he “lost his way”, immersed in the detail of his creation.”*⁶⁰ Although Martin came to recognise the possibility that artists and their customers were inspired by the surrounding tombs, he overlooked the similarities between the Old Kingdom ‘examples’ and the newer interpretation. The interpretation of an ‘old’ traditional scene found in the tomb of Tia & Tia may be a deliberate result of the creative process. Through this process a more playful interpretation was created based on new meanings and motives; and so certainly were not a mistake.⁶¹ For a full understanding of the religious practices at Saqqara, it is thus vital to interpret the relief decoration as part of a complex process and to study the transmission of these images⁶² and their appropriation. The marsh scenes in the Old Kingdom mastabas show boats involved in fishing, fowling or pleasure cruises,⁶³ which could be Tia & Tia’s aim, or they used the motif to illustrate an Osirian pilgrimage (see also above). Interestingly both themes tie water themes into the broader imagery of the desired regeneration of the deceased. It is clear that Tia & Tia considered the cultural geography surrounding them and appropriated ancient imagery in a creative way in order to illustrate their contemporary ideas.

Case study 3: Factors of location & locality: the tomb of Horemheb and its neighbours

- 12 Space is an important factor in religious agency at Saqqara and it is clear from Iurudéf, that the locality of his tomb-chapel within the walls of Tia and Tia’s tomb expressed favourably on him. In fact, the spot of Tia & Tia’s tomb itself is probably not coincidental. Unfortunately, very little is known about how exactly the plots were allocated and by whom.⁶⁴ For the Old Kingdom we know that some tomb owners were very proud to acknowledge that they were buried on a spot that was not used before, but no such phrasing is known from New Kingdom inscriptions, and there is a lot of evidence of demolishing earlier tombs and/or reusing stone elements⁶⁵ and shafts.⁶⁶ There is also inscriptions that warned both future tomb visitors and necropolis tomb builders from reusing the tomb owner’s property.⁶⁷ These texts thus illustrate nicely that such reuse was actually common practice and the ancient Egyptians knew that this occurred. The destruction or reuse of earlier tombs was not always accepted or even desirable as proximity to an older tomb might have had religious motive and created a gain of status. The location of the tomb of Tia & Tia situated north of the tomb of Horemheb (roughly 1300 BCE) is probably no coincidence.

Royal veneration in practice

- 13 Horemheb's tomb is without doubt the most important 18th dynasty tomb in this portion of the Saqqara necropolis. Horemheb was a high state official and general during the reign of king Tutankhamun and later became the king that founded the 19th dynasty (the Ramesside period when Tia & Tia lived). Because of his rise to king, he was buried in a royal tomb in the Valley of the Kings in Thebes, about 600km south of Saqqara, and then used his Saqqara tomb for the burial of his second wife Mutnodjemet.⁶⁸ Like most monumental tombs, the walls of the accessible areas aboveground were decorated with reliefs – a very interesting portion of his relief is currently in the National Museum of Antiquities in Leiden.⁶⁹ It shows a representation of then still general Horemheb receiving the 'gold of honour' from the king, which was a prestigious royal reward offered to meritorious officials belonging to the highest Egyptian elite.⁷⁰ Fascinatingly, at some point an uraeus (a cobra) was carved to the forehead of general Horemheb. This illustrates the later veneration of king Horemheb as the cobra was one of the royal insignia, which is also indicated by offering deposits in the tomb's forecourt.⁷¹ More concrete evidence that can be linked to veneration by an inscription dating to the times of Ramesses II which proves that about 20 years after Horemheb's death, a family of mortuary priests was still in charge of offering services.⁷² This is concurrent to the time when Tia & Tia built their tomb, adding significant importance to their proximity to Horemheb's tomb (in fact squeezed in between Horemheb and his contemporary Maya, Tia's northern neighbour⁷³).

Association by proximity

- 14 When Tia & Tia built their tomb next to Horemheb's and his contemporary Maya, the cult of Horemheb was still ongoing. Tia was overseer of the treasury, like his northern neighbour Maya, dating to about two decades earlier. Professional association could thus be one consideration for the 'choice' for the location of the tomb.⁷⁴ As to the tomb's location near Horemheb, the fact that Tia's wife (also called Tia) was the sister of king Ramesses II could be relevant.⁷⁵ Tia & Tia's family relation to the royal court and to Horemheb's royal ancestry could hence also have been a factor in the tomb's location (either by means of their own choice or privileges in an official tomb allocation procedure). These factors are of course mutually reinforcing rather than exclusive.⁷⁶ The relief decoration in the tomb of Tia & Tia focusses strongly on the veneration of both the underworld god Osiris and the king Ramesses II, so besides being their tomb, it has a wider use as a space of veneration for the defied Ramesses II should be considered as well.⁷⁷

Case study 4: Commemoration in the tomb of Raia

- 15 Relative proximity to Horemheb's tomb also applies to the small tomb-chapel of Raia,⁷⁸ a singer of the god Ptah (i.e. a priest), and a contemporary of Tia & Tia. Raia's tomb was situated west of the tomb of Horemheb, although his tomb is in fact closer to the tomb of Paser as they share a southern wall.⁷⁹ Raia's cult chapel was built entirely of limestone, similar to other small Ramesside chapels in the area.⁸⁰ The main cult stela shows Raia and his wife, the singer of the god Amun (i.e. a priestess), Mutemwia,

receiving a libation offering by a lector priest called Shedamun.⁸¹ The northern wall of the chapel shows the seated couple, Raia and Mutemwia, receiving offerings from the same lector priest.⁸² Behind Shedamun the representation of a lady, perhaps his wife, is damaged. Underneath the chairs of Mutemwia and Raia sits an anonymous girl, perhaps their daughter.⁸³ In the lower register Mutemwia and Raia stand in adoration at a shrine of the god Anubis followed by Mutemwia's sisters, Iuy and Kaia, and the female servant, Shanefer, with a calf. Though Raia's tomb is small in scale (1.50 x 1.80m), it shows a variety of named family members, colleagues and even a female servant. The relationship between lector priest Shedamun and the deceased couple is unclear. He could be a close friend of the family, or perhaps he was a hired professional to perform the job that normally the eldest son was expected to perform, that is to be in charge of the mortuary offerings of his parents.⁸⁴ Apparently, however, Raia and Mutemwia only had a daughter, and she might have died in early age as she appears underneath the chair of the deceased unnamed. Contemporaries of the deceased probably knew the name of the anonymous little daughter (if she was named before she died), when they visited the tomb shortly after the burial. Yet representations of anonymous individuals did not enter the eternal commemoration of the deceased in the same way, because their names were probably forgotten after three or four generations, or earlier. Immortality in ancient Egypt thus depended on the response of others.⁸⁵ The absence of other children in the tomb of Raia explains why lector priest Shedamun performed the required offerings. What is important is that by being identified by name and title, as Shedamun and Shanefer, they were favoured by the tomb owner. Given their relatively low rank and income, Shedamun, and surely Shanefer, were not able to afford a monumental tomb and might have been buried in a pit grave possibly even without monumental markers typical for the lower classes. Even more than Iurufef above, who had his own tomb – albeit integrated in his superior's tomb – their representation in Raia's tomb thus provided Shedamun and Shanefer with religious agency probably not otherwise available to them.

Customizing mortuary tradition in the tomb of Raia

- 16 The tomb of Raia is also interesting in terms of transmission of texts and images as his chapel has some unusual scenes. In the top register Raia plays the harp in front of the two gods Ptah and Hathor.⁸⁶ A harpist's scene in a Saqqara tomb is interesting, because there are few parallels from this site, most other so-called harpist's songs (i.e. the texts relating to the scene) are known from Thebes, about 700km south of Saqqara. These texts deal with the transition of the deceased from this world to the afterlife. Some scholars have argued that encounters between the deceased and the living were celebrated at a festival in Thebes, and therefore explaining the fact that there are more examples known from that region.⁸⁷ However, the fact that harpist's songs are known from Saqqara and that large parts of Saqqara await excavation should be taken into account. For example, a new tomb has been excavated near Raia's tomb fairly recently which also holds a harpist's song.⁸⁸ Another isolated block with a harpist's scene from an unknown tomb owner may have come from Saqqara as well.⁸⁹ The text in Raia's tomb is fragmentary and the corpus is quite small, but there is enough that Twiston Davies could demonstrate the 'construction' of the songs from formulaic phrases, which finds parallels in the work by Ramadan Hussein⁹⁰ who also saw the overall composition of the tomb decoration as made up of stock phrases consisting of sets of

texts. The harpist's songs hence form an interesting case study making less relevant the question of 'who quotes whom', and to rather investigate how these phrases "worked in a living tradition".⁹¹

- 17 The harpist's text and scene in Raia's tomb are also interesting in terms of religious practices. The representation is probably best understood as showing Raia performing his daily job as chief singer in a temple. This idea is supported by the detail that the harp was adorned with a royal head, which indicates that it was probably used in an 'official' context⁹² (all known parallels derive from representations of temple contexts or royal festivals). In fact another chief singer, called Amenemhab Mahu, is depicted similarly.⁹³ As to the iconography of the scene in Raia's tomb, usually the tomb owner was sung to by a harpist.⁹⁴ Twiston Davies suggests that the scene may anticipate later devotional representations of the deceased playing the harp before a god.⁹⁵ In addition to commemorating his profession (and hence status), Raia perhaps aimed to continue his veneration of the gods Ptah and Hathor for eternity. As such the scene could also be understood as evidence for his religious practice similar to the potential pilgrimage by Tia & Tia. To the question of how the tomb decoration worked in the lived tradition of Saqqara, it seems quite clear that tomb decoration was at least in parts a reflection of individual religious practices and profession of the respective tomb owners who borrowed from a larger repertoire of texts and images and creatively appropriated them to their own needs and desires.

Case study 5: Modern interventions into the cultural geography of Saqqara

- 18 The tomb of Maya & Merit, Tia's northern neighbours, has been touched upon above. Maya was overseer of the treasury under king Tutankhamun and probably died in the year 9 of the reign of Horemheb.⁹⁶ It is plausible that both Maya and Horemheb's tombs were thus built a reasonable distance apart of about 11 meters in the 18th dynasty and that it was only later, when the area filled up, that other tombs such as Tia & Tia's were squeezed in between the existing ones.⁹⁷
- 19 Maya & Merit are represented in three large monumental statues, which were bought by the National Museum of Antiquities in Leiden in 1828 as part of the large art collection of Giovanni d'Anastasi, who was Swedish-Norwegian consul general in Egypt between 1828-1857. D'Anastasi's collection contained many objects from Saqqara and it is clear that his agents were digging in that area in the 19th century.⁹⁸ At that time, there was a vibrant trade of antiquities in Egypt. Early explorers and antiquities dealers could easily export large parts of their finds (although a decree of Mohammed Ali from 1835 provided some guidance for regulation⁹⁹). It was only in 1859, then under Mohammed Said, that an Egyptian Antiquities Service was founded to better control and protect the state's antiquities. In 1843, thus 15 years after the statues of Maya and Merit had purchased by the Leiden museum, the Prussian expedition to Egypt led by the German Egyptologist Carl Richard Lepsius,¹⁰⁰ published a map of Saqqara in which the location of the tomb of Maya was indicated. It was, however, not before the 1970s that the British Egyptologist Geoffrey Martin linked the statues and the map and endeavoured to rediscover Maya's tomb at Saqqara in a joint mission of the Egypt Exploration Society and the National Museum of Antiquities Leiden. The tomb was rediscovered in 1986 and the excavations still continue, now in cooperation with the

Museo Egizio in Turin.¹⁰¹ The distribution of artefacts and the excavation activities since the 19th century add another layer to the cultural geography of Saqqara, which connects Egyptian and European history. One of the main aims of current Egyptological scholarship is to reconstruct the various assemblages of Egyptian mummies and artefacts scattered over the world by the early antiquities trade and to reconstruct their original provenance and meaning.

Conclusion

- 20 The case studies above illustrate the interconnected research perspectives of the Walking Dead approach: practices, transmission and landscape. The combination of these themes give a better understanding of ancient religious agency and how the environment we see today was being shaped by the ancient Egyptian appropriation of traditions as well as by later interventions. In ancient Egypt, the monuments themselves are carriers of evidence for practices, transmission, and landscape. This approach could also be applied to other ancient cultures,¹⁰² because it studies historical agency from a broad yet focussed perspective and creates an understanding of the past cultural complexities. The study of these focussed perspectives will create a fully-fledged model of the making of a cultural geography of an ancient site. Religious agency does not appear in an empty space. The locations of the tombs depended on where existing tombs were in terms of space allocation, but new tomb owners also wished to relate themselves to either important public figures, their employers, friends, or relatives. The ancient Egyptian tradition of architectural design, style and decoration was not purely ornamental, but had a deeper religious significance and was not created in isolation. The tomb owners knew each other and prominent figures of their time, and even if they did not know tomb owners sometimes predating them by up to 1000 years, they saw their monuments and borrowed from their traditions to create their own by means of adaptation, appropriation, modification, and innovation.

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NOTES

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2. MCDANNELL 1995; ORSI 2005; MCGUIRE 2008.

3. RÜPKE 2011, 1; ALBRECHT *et al.* 2018.

4. RÜPKE 2011, 10-11.

5. ALBRECHT *et al.* 2018; RÜPKE, URCIUOLI 2019, 117-122.

6. See also RÜPKE 2015.

7. See also RÜPKE, URCIUOLI 2019 in whose case the urban city-space became the new spatial focus and fundamentally on space LEFEBVRE 1999 (1994); 2003 (1970); SOJA 1989.

8. DE CERTEAU 1984 (1980).

9. Compare also RÜPKE, URCIUOLI 2019.

10. In Certeau's terms the so-called "'ways of operating"' constitute the innumerable practices by means of which users *reappropriate* (emphasis mine) the space organised by techniques of sociocultural production'; cf. DE CERTEAU 1984, xiv and see also the discussion of Certeau's approach by GARDINER 2000, 167-168 and 177.

11. RÜPKE, URCIUOLI 2019, 119.

12. GIDDENS 1984; WEISS 2012.

13. RECKWITZ 2012, 251-252.

14. RAVEN 2010 for some preliminary thoughts, a comprehensive analysis is in preparation by Huw Twiston Davies.

15. As suggested by RAVEN 2000, a comprehensive analysis of these matters is in preparation by Nico Staring.
16. E.g. SOLIMAN 2014, 35 and on the project see STARING, TWISTON DAVIES, WEISS 2019, 8-9.
17. In case of doubt of the general applicability of modern theory on ancient sources, cf. WILLEMS 2013.
18. E.g. MÁLEK 1992, 57-76; RAVEN 2000, 133-144.
19. See e.g. DEL VESCO et al. 2019.
20. E.g. OCKINGA 2014.
21. E.g. ZIVIE 2009; 2013.
22. E.g. GOHARY 2009.
23. Future research will also consider the temples and divine processions in the Memphite areas.
24. E.g. ROBINS 2016, 205.
25. E.g. SHUBERT 2007.
26. Leiden inv. no. AP 11, cf. GIOVETTI, PICCHI 2015, cat. V.27.
27. MARTIN 1985, pl. 10 and ASSMANN 2005, 267 and 549.
28. Compare e.g. WEISS 2015 with references.
29. RAVEN 2014, 124-125 [30] and ASSMANN 2005, 129.
30. RAVEN et al. 2008-2009, 22 and fig. 14.
31. RAVEN et al. 2014-2015, 13-14.
32. See also GESSLER-LÖHR, OCKINGA, BINDER (forthcoming). I would like to thank Beatrix Gessler-Löhr for kindly sharing her manuscript with me and for the always fruitful and most pleasant cooperation.
33. RAVEN et al. 2014-2015, 13.
34. Evidence for offerings containing organic natural acids were found on an Middle Kingdom offering table recently see LEGROS 2016, 94. I would like to thank Alexander Ilin-Tomich for kindly providing the reference. On the offering scenes in relation to the tree goddess see GESSLER-LÖHR, OCKINGA, BINDER (forthcoming).
35. Compare e.g. WEISS 2015 with references.
36. MEYER-DIETRICH 2018.
37. The few existing studies of Egyptian perception skills such as 'hearing' and 'seeing' focused on the regain of those abilities by the deceased, e.g. WIEBACH-KOEPKE 2003; ROEDER 1996, 307-330.
38. MEYER-DIETRICH 2018, 505-514.
39. Against the recent criticism by ALLON (2019) I would still consider the Egyptian high elite of the New Kingdom as in principle literate. Allon's argument is that the elite did not usually represent themselves writing in their tombs, but employed scribes and that this indicates a certain disdain towards writing. Even if that would be true it would not mean that they were themselves not literate. A too literally understanding of tomb decoration is problematic. There is a range of topics not usually represented in tombs that we know existed such as houses, for instance.
40. BELTING 1991, 20-21.
41. Considering hieroglyphs but not images in general see LANDGRÁFOVÁ 2014, 133-156.
42. Compare also the discussion of the context of performance by TWISTON DAVIES 2019, 111.
43. WEISS 2019, 61-67.
44. ZIVIE 2009.
45. GOHARY 2009; 2010.
46. See MARTIN 2012.
47. TEETER 1997, 77.
48. VISCHAK 2015, 213.

49. See also ARP 2012, 170; HERZBERG 2019.
50. MARTIN 1997, pl. 47.
51. MARTIN 1997, 27-28 and see also IKRAM, DODSON 2008, 255.
52. For a critical perspective on Old Kingdom sources see e.g. LASHIEN 2009.
53. MARTIN 1997, 28.
54. See also WEISS 2019; STARING 2018.
55. MARTIN 1997, 35 and pls 3 and 56.
56. E.g. FLAPP 1989.
57. STARING 2016, 365; RAVEN 2017, 83-85; STARING 2019.
58. MARTIN 1997, 31.
59. See e.g. VAN WALSEM 2008.
60. MARTIN 1997, 31.
61. DEL VESCO, WEISS 2017.
62. Coined intericonicity by LABOURY 2017, and see also DEN DONCKER 2017.
63. E.g. DUNNICLIFF 2012.
64. E.g. RAVEN 2000, 134.
65. E.g. HARPUR 2009.
66. E.g. RAVEN 2011, 140-141.
67. That is removing blocks from a tomb and reuse them for somebody else's own tomb as happened frequently, cf. eg. SHUBERT 2007, 42.
68. STROUHAL 2008, 1-4.
69. E.g. RAVEN 2011.
70. BINDER 2008.
71. RAVEN 2011, 191.
72. MARTIN 1989.
73. Cf. MARTIN 1997, 3.
74. E.g. RAVEN 2000, 136.
75. MARTIN 1997, 2.
76. Contra RAVEN 2000, 138.
77. E.g. HOFMANN 2004, 103.
78. MARTIN 1985.
79. MARTIN 1985, 10 and pl. 1.
80. E.g. DEL VESCO, WEISS 2017.
81. MARTIN 1985, 10-11 and pl. 17.
82. MARTIN 1985, 14 and pl. 24.
83. MARTIN 1985, 14 and pl. 24.
84. MCCORQUODALE 2012, 71-88; OLABARRIA 2018, 99.
85. WEISS 2019.
86. MARTIN 1985, 12-13 and pl. 22, recently studied by TWISTON DAVIES 2019.
87. FISCHER 1999, 145; WESTENDORF 1991, 225-230.
88. OETERS 2017, 57; RAVEN et al. 2015.
89. TWISTON DAVIES 2019; SIMPSON 1982, 133-137; FREED 1981, 256-258, no. 362.
90. HUSSEIN 2013.
91. EYRE 1990, 160.
92. Parallels listed by SCHOTT 1935-1938, 461.
93. TWISTON DAVIES 2019; KUENTZ 1922, 601-610.
94. TWISTON DAVIES 2019; FISCHER 1999.
95. See also ZIEGLER, BOVOT 2001, 254-255, fig. 153.

96. VAN DIJK 1993, 76-79.
 97. On the distribution of tombs see also STARING 2019.
 98. E.g. REID 2002, 38.
 99. Reid 2000, 54-56.
 100. Lepsius 1849-1859, vol. I, pl. 33.
 101. DEL VESCO *et al.* 2019.
 102. See Staring/Twiston Davies/Weiss 2019.
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ABSTRACTS

The 'Walking Dead' approach presented here provides a methodologically interesting lens into ancient religious agency. Inspired by theories by Andreas Reckwitz, Jörg Rüpke and others, this new *praxeological methodology* seeks to add historical depth to the question of the formation of religious traditions and how these are negotiated between individuals and groups in an ancient context. The claim of the Walking Dead approach is that these processes become tangible in ancient cultures by three vectors of religious agency which are looking into religious practices, transmission of text and images and the use-life of the landscape. Five case studies from (ancient) Egypt will demonstrate how the 'Walking Dead' approach is helpful to detect how traditions as well are shaped by these vectors and how this is visible in a site's dynamic cultural geography.

L'approccio 'Walking Dead' qui presentato fornisce una lente metodologicamente utile sull'*agency* religiosa nell'antichità. Ispirata alle posizioni di Andreas Reckwitz, Jörg Rüpke e altri, questa metodologia prasseologica mira ad aggiungere profondità storica alla questione della formazione delle diverse tradizioni religiose e di come queste vengano negoziate tra individui e gruppi in un contesto antico. L'idea di fondo è che questi processi diventano tangibili nelle culture antiche grazie a tre vettori dell'azione religiosa che indagano le pratiche religiose, la trasmissione di testi e immagini e il ciclo di vita del paesaggio. Cinque casi studio dall'Egitto (antico) dimostreranno come l'approccio 'Walking Dead' sia utile per rilevare come le tradizioni siano plasmate anche da questi vettori e come questo sia visibile nella dinamica geografia culturale di un sito.

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Keywords: Ancient Egypt, Cultural Geography, use-life, lived ancient religion

Parole chiave: Antico Egitto, geografia culturale, ciclo di vita, lived ancient religion

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