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The Kushite Queen Irtieru and Her Tomb, Nuri 53

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Abstract
The tomb of Irtieru, wife of the king (Atlanersa), sister of the king, daughter of the king (Taharka or Tanutamani?), "*rmṯ n Kmt*," is a typical Napatan monument. The burial chamber, which is one of the very few remaining Kushite painted rooms, has been ignored by Egyptologists since its excavation, falling into a large group of disregarded and misunderstood inscribed monuments from Nuri, some of which the author has already discussed in print. This article explains how the tomb can be understood when freed from the misperceptions of an Egyptocentric viewpoint.

The tomb of Irtieru, wife of the king (Atlanersa), sister of the king, daughter of the king (Taharka or Tanutamani?), "*rmṯ n Kmt*,"[1] is a typical Napatan monument. By that I mean that it is composed of Egyptian elements that are not presented in a typically Egyptian way. It has thus become a case of the imposition of an Egyptocentric viewpoint on a non-Egyptian phenomenon. It is different from what Egyptologists expect. Why? Because they assume the Kushites did not understand the materials and sources they were working with? (That was a very popular response to all things Kushite in the past.) Or is it different because the Kushites altered the Egyptian source materials to suit their own needs? (A much less popular response because it implied that it was the scholar whose expectations were not met and who therefore did not understand.) As a result of this Egyptocentric attitude, much Napatan material has been ignored by Egyptologists, one more in a collection of disregarded inscribed monuments from Nuri, some of which I have already discussed in print.[2] This article will rescue the tomb of Irtieru from that group and demonstrate how her burial chamber is reflective of Egyptian and Kushite traditions on a most subtle and knowledgeable level, especially in the way the textual and visual content of a critical scene in Egyptian religion has been altered to serve the specific needs of a Kushite queen deep in the Sudan.

Before moving to a description of the tomb chamber, however, another topic, the name of the queen and her titles, tempts us almost immediately

into what looks like a detour. However, the identity and connections of this woman, while they cannot be settled here, have some bearing on the nature of her tomb decoration, and we will therefore look at what we know and can perhaps presume.

Irtieru is a short form of a theophoric name. Instead of including a divine name, as does a similar popular name in the period, *irty n ḥr ir.w*, "The two eyes of Horus (or Amun, also common) are against them," Irtieru's name translates only as "The two eyes are against them."[3] By not including a divinity in the name to identify the owner of the "eyes," who are apparently looking malevolently at an enemy, an opportunity has been lost to honor the god whose name forms a part of so many Kushite names, such as Tanutamani, Anlamani, Senkamenisken, etc. Is this intentional? It might well be, especially if the name was given to her in Egypt.

A related issue is, who does "them," against whom the two eyes have been directed, refer to? According to Ranke,[4] they are "fremde Herrscher" whom Irtieru, bearer of this historical and politically "revolutionary" name, subtly attacks. Would she or the person who gave her the name have been protesting the Assyrians, who attacked Egypt, destroyed cities, and forced the Kushites back to Sudan? Either an Egyptian or a Kushite Irtieru could have borne it proudly. Or does the name protest the Kushites, who were ruling Egypt at the time of her birth? If she is Kushite, is she protesting the Egyptians? Or is her bearing of the name neutral, without political import, despite the fact that it seems from its meaning to be political?

Any potential confusion over her name is not cleared up by an examination of her titles, which are not straightforward. Who are the kings identified as Irtieru's father and brother in the titles "wife of the king (Atlanersa), sister of the king, daughter of the king?" Reisner and Dunham considered her a daughter of Taharqa, as did Janssen.[5] However, based on the similarity of decoration in Irtieru's tomb to that in the tomb of Tanutamani and Qalhata, namely the use of paint on plaster, and the general color scheme, not to mention the similarity of content in the burial chambers (see below), and Tanutamani's proven willingness to decorate the tombs of female relatives, Dodson's view that Tanutamani is her father seems very likely to this writer. However, should Dunham and Janssen be correct, Irtieru would have been a half(?) sister of Amenirdis II. This, with the speculation that she might have had training in Egypt or been born there, would support the identification of Taharqa as her father because we know that at least some of her siblings would have been established there, and there could have been a place for her in her sister's retinue.

Usually the title *rmṯ n Kmt* would be translated as something like "person/woman/resident of Egypt = the Egyptian." But what, exactly, does/did that mean? To the Egyptians, it apparently meant the person was Egyptian, and it has been suggested that the title obviously tells us that Irtieru is Egyptian,[6] although she certainly looks Kushite in her tomb and also in Barkal temple 700, where she is pictured.[7]

It might well be that the title had other meanings as well, or that describing someone as Egyptian did not carry the same meaning as we expect from our own similar usage of ethnicity-based adjectives.

Still, we need to ask more questions. She is also titled "wife of a king, daughter of a king, sister of a king." Could she be called Egyptian if she is a daughter of one Kushite king and a sister of another? Can having some Egyptian blood have been so remarkable in Kushite circles as to warrant a special title? That hardly seems likely to our way of thinking, since Egyptians at many periods lived in Kush. Is it possible that the word "king" refers not to a Kushite royal connection but to an Egyptian royal connection? Was she a member of a royal family there? If so, her title is a very modest and confusing choice for communicating such an important relationship and such high status. Again, on her monuments, Irtieru and her attire look very Nubian. As noted above, at Barkal 700 she is not distinguishable from the other Nubian wives of Aspelta, including in her clothing. In her tomb, she is shown as darker skinned than the Egyptian figures of Isis and Osiris, with whom she stands on the west wall, which fact is surely intended to point out her ethnicity.

Thus, the title *rmṯ n Kmt* raises a number of questions about the queen, but it does not provide much assistance in answering them. This situation hints that the title may not mean in Kush exactly what it means in Egypt. Could the word *rmṯ* have a meaning of which we are unaware? Looked at from another angle, the title might indeed mean exactly what we think it means. As a daughter of a Kushite king, Irtieru could have been born in Egypt, perhaps even of an Egyptian mother, although this would be difficult to prove. Or perhaps she was born in present-day Sudan and had been taken to the north, given an Egyptian name (after an adoption by an

Egyptian priestess?), and raised to fill a high position as an assistant to a God's Wife or a singer in the interior of the Amun temple.[8] Of course, with the coming of the Assyrians, the Kushite Irtieru will have been spirited back to Nubia, but the title might refer to such an Egyptian period in her life. If she had been trained as a priestess in Egypt, her cultural and educational connections with Egypt might well explain it. This is, of course, pure speculation. Then too, we would have to seek a similar connection with Egypt for another woman, also a *rmṯ n Kmt*, Asata,[9] for which we might not be successful, since she lived at least two generations after Irtieru, and thus after the period when Kushite influence in high places could have put her into the entourage of the god's wife.

It has been suggested that there are two Irtierus, perhaps one a daughter of Taharqa and the other a daughter of an unmentioned royal male. It seems unnecessary to postulate the presence of two women in order to distinguish the owner of Nuri 53 from a second woman of the same name, same generation, and same royal circle. Egyptian names (such as Irtieru) do exist among female members of the Kushite royal family, often with the name of Isis embedded in them, but this is not the case here. "Isis" is not embedded in the name in the Bankes Manuscript alongside other queens of Atlanersa at a Gebel Barkal temple.[10] These two are surely only one in the same. Not only is "Irtieru" a quite common name in Egypt at this period, but it is thoroughly Egyptian in content as well as grammar and lexis.

To continue with our questions, we note that "Irtieru" is different from the many theophoric female names based on "Isis" in the Kushite royal family in the Napatan period, partly because the name of the goddess is not embedded in "Irtieru," but also because the meaning of Irtieru does not seem relevant to Kushite concerns or important deities. Why would she be named in such an unusual way from others of her rank and status if she had been born and named in Kush, unless she had spent time in Egypt? Name duplication itself is much less common in Kush than in Egypt (another reason two Irtierus in the same generation and circle seem unlikely), so since "Irtieru" is commonly bestowed on children in Egypt and the name is amply attested, perhaps the queen really was Egyptian, as her name and title suggest. It certainly speaks for Irtieru having some sort of lasting connection with Egypt that other Kushite women did not have.[11] The fact that her name is spelled slightly differently on both monuments, at Nuri and at Gebel Barkal, and that her titles are listed inconsistently seems unsurprising for the period, as we shall see below.

The answers to the questions above have not exactly brought great illumination to Irtieru's story. They certainly highlight how little we know about this woman and her times. Nonetheless, the examination of her tomb may contribute somewhat more to our understanding of her, as it places her within a unique group of Kushite royals who have tombs painted with ancient Egyptian motifs used in a way that employs Egyptian religious imagery and belief to achieve Kushite goals. Her tomb undoubtedly made a powerful statement in Kushite society as well, reinforcing her position among the most elite circles as a woman very much favored. The impression of sophistication and the command of Egyptian magic and motifs in this space with its large figures will have put the viewer directly in the center of the magical process and the presence of the gods. It underlined for other elites the uniqueness of the reigning family and its part in a vast complicated religious world.

Not only because others might see it but also because the magic had to be just right, the tomb needed to be understandable as a powerful story even if the audience was without the ability to read the accompanying texts (which were, of course, in a foreign language that even few native speakers could have read). For those who could read them, there was another layer of meaning, a second narrative with allusions to mythology and other gods, with greater subtlety and a much deeper understanding. This layering is also true in the case of the Tanutamani group of tombs (Qalhata, Arty, and Tanutamani), where both narratives in the tombs are roughly the same, but the second telling is enriched greatly by the textual additions. In the case of Irtieru, the narratives are rather different, but the first and the second narrative are visually and textually the same. This layering of ideas and narratives, a combination of the visuals of the first narrative followed by a second use and interpretation of the same format, ties her tomb closely to that of Tanutamani and also enables her to participate in the increasingly popular morality test of the negative confession, which continued to be used in Kush until deep in the Meroitic-period chapels at Begarawiya.[12]

This relationship between Tanutamani's family tombs and that of Irtieru (details will appear below)

is an important piece of evidence suggesting strongly that Irtieru was a daughter of Tanutamani. We can guess what happened after the Assyrians' attack. Irtieru and her father went back to Kush, where she undoubtedly became one of the most important women at the Napatan court. She adopted traditional dress and participated in court rituals. She married a king. Her tomb and Barkal temple 700 show her as a Nubian, acting her part in one of the most important of rituals and protected by traditional shawabtis in the usual royal way.

It seems useful to look at a woman who had a life much like Irtieru might have had if she had remained in Egypt. Her name was also Irtieru, and she was the Egyptian owner of Theban tomb 390 in the Asasif. She was a member of the entourage of Nitocris (daughter of Psammetichus I), the daughter of a god's father of Amun, and she had the titles of a "(female) scribe, the eyes of the divine worshipper, the ears of the god's wife, and a great follower of Nitocris," who was the last god's wife of Amun. Mariam Ayad[13], who has studied this tomb, mentions that not all of her titles are listed consistently throughout it. This is one of the issues that has resulted in the idea that there were two women named Irtieru. It seems, however, to be simply a characteristic of the times. Julia Budka references difficulties in reproducing Kushite names and spellings in a writing system not designed for the language. Janice Yellin confirms that inconsistency in the presentation of titles exists in the Meroitic period as well.[14] As a result, we can conclude only that, in some cases, individuals cannot have been overly concerned about how their titles were listed and displayed. Perhaps this is not only true of non-native residents or other speakers of Egyptian as a second language, as Budka suggests, but only a peculiarity of the period, since Ayad noted that inconsistencies can also be found in the presentation of titles in the tomb of the highly placed Theban Irtieru in the Asasif. Another woman, Ditankh, whom we will discuss later, had a life as a singer in Thebes and, like Irtieru, was buried with a negative-confession format surrounding her that functions in much the same way as does Irtieru's burial chamber.

Such painted tombs at Kurru and Nuri were obviously designed by an individual, or multiple individuals, with a deep knowledge of Egyptian religion and beliefs and the ingenuity to visualize the burial chambers as spaces that display not only two-dimensional paintings on walls but also serve as spaces that become three-dimensional locations for the performance/re-creation of some of the great moments in ancient western religious history—death and the rebirth of kings and gods, the beginnings of moral responsibility, and triumphant entry into the afterlife. The decorations step off the walls, filling the entire room, creating an arena for action. The rooms have one focus only: to show a ritual and perhaps to contain its performance. This style differs considerably from that which was popular at Nuri, where chapters of the Book of the Dead are "rolled out" on the walls and create the appearance of a papyrus. Her tomb makes Irtieru stand out as unique again. Because of the style, her tomb surely belongs in this group. She is, in this way, particularly associated with King Tanutamani, who was responsible for the decoration of his tomb and that of his mother, Qalhata, as well as a supposed aunt and wife, Arty, of Kurru 6,[15] and very possibly aunt of Irtieru as well.[16]

Irtieru was buried under a small pyramid at Nuri in a single painted chamber (Fig. 1). There was reportedly no trace of a chapel. The first excavation was conducted in 1916–1918 by George Reisner in a joint Harvard University-Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, expedition. Recent re-excavations under Dr. Pearce Paul Creasman also found no trace of a chapel.[17]

The west wall of the burial chamber contains a simple offering scene: the deceased stands to the right of an offering table, and on its left sits Osiris, with Isis standing behind him. Irtieru faces them, hands raised in adoration. There is an offering text above. The north and south walls show standing figures of mummified personages, which we identify in this—the first and visual narrative—as shawabtis, facing the west wall.[18] Because the walls have been so damaged by water, they retain mostly just the heads and upper torsos of the figures. The figures are all human headed.

Above them on each wall is a horizontal line of offering text, and a short strip of text hangs down from the horizontal before each figure. The figures are not named, nor do they carry knives or bits of plants, as such rows of figures often do on coffins and sarcophagi of the period. The vertical text columns before the figures contain their brief utterances. They face Osiris and say, "May he give…," followed by an assortment of desirables such as food, sweet and pleasant things, good things, etc. These function like

Figure 1: Irtieru's burial chamber (A. Piccinati/ Nuri Archaeological Expedition).

a *ḥtp dỉ nsw* text and have been translated by Meghan Strong.[19] If the figures from the wall were to step down into the room and stand in lines beside the corpse in the same way they are depicted on the wall, and if the queen's remains still lay in the room, the paintings would form a three-dimensional tableau, and that scene would show quite clearly how the first and most important role of the figures is to guard the queen, whose funeral bier they cordon off. They are the *Stundenwachen*, the hour watchers. In other words, they are, first of all, her protectors who are responsible for her reaching the day of her burial as

an intact mummy. The night before burial is when the judgment takes place, in the Kushite view, based on the tomb of Tanutamani, where the spells for the protection of the heart are located between the burial and the awakening.

The pictorial representation shows the concept behind Kushite tomb decoration within the group of tombs of the Tanutamani type. Within this type, the pictures relate the narrative first, and the first layer of narrative is a simple chronicle of a situation or related events that does not need a written narrative. The visual story in Irtieru's tomb is that the queen requires and receives the protection of the figures on the long north and south walls. With it, she will enter the company of Osiris (west wall).

These mummiform figures painted on the walls, identified as shawabtis,[20] stand in relation to Irtieru's corpse in the same way as real shawabtis line the walls of many Napatan tombs.[21] They are protective figures on sarcophagi and coffins, and they may be seated or standing, mummies or striding living figures, in a booth or not. They may appear with or without feathers on their heads that would identify them as judges during the trial in the underworld, they may be surrounded by texts or not, holding knives or plants or not, and have either human or animal heads. They may be guardians of gates or doors in the underworld, or time-honored protectors of the corpse such as the four sons of Horus, or gods who protect the deceased in some other way. They may be the *Stundenwachen* who stand in Tanutamani's and Qalhata's burial chambers, in lines parallel to the long sides of the coffin bench in each corner of the room, in order to guard them during the long "hours of watching" over the corpse in the night between mummification and the funeral.

Of course, if, as is the case with Anlamani and Aspelta, the Kushite deceased may lie in a sarcophagus and/or coffins, then guardians and protectors of the body can be pictured along the sides of the box, or container, to play the same protective role as the actual shawabtis who line the tomb walls. All of this demonstrates that guarding the deceased was of the first order of importance among Napatan elite and royals. And in Napata, many sorts of figures could fill that role, and for Irtieru they were the shawabtis.

The key to understanding the narratives in Irtieru's tomb lies in the purpose of the figures on the wall. While it is clear that the shawabtis in Kush and the lines of figures on Twenty-fifth and Twenty-sixth Dynasty mummy cases are protectors, we want to investigate how the concept of protectors of the dead became attached to shawabtis in Kush while the figures still retained older attributes related to agricultural production in the afterlife.[22] Kushite alterations and experimentations with the agricultural implements which these shawabtis carried demonstrates that they were still invested in the agricultural role of the figurines in addition to their new protective functions.[23] And still in this role, Napatan shawabtis often "wear" the text of Book of the Dead 6, which details those agricultural duties, as do Egyptian shawabtis.

Brigitte Balanda, considering these Napatan shawabtis to be protectors of the dead, traced that idea in writing back to the Nesikhons Decree of the Twenty-first Dynasty, and the "shawabtis" in the ideal burial chamber of Book of the Dead 151.[24] She believes that the idea of shawabtis as protectors was already present in Egyptian thought during the Third Intermediate Period and that it was not a uniquely Kushite idea as has sometimes been said. Gianluca Miniaci also references Nesikhons as transformative in regard to the change in function of the shawabti itself in the Third Intermediate Period, because the decree emphasizes the shifted identification of the shawabti as a worker and servant of the deceased, no longer actually equated with the owner as a representation of him or her.[25] The separation of the object from the idea that it was actually the owner of the tomb enabled the Kushites to consider shawabtis as useful guardians, as signs of status and wealth, and as field workers, as needed.

We now have to account for the fact that these figures on the wall in Irtieru's chamber are reciting a sort of *ḥtp dỉ nsw* formula on behalf of the queen. In the tomb, the figures' recitation begins in the same way as Irtieru's request to Osiris on the west wall, "May he give...." This request, "may he give," can sometimes be for a good burial but is often for food offerings. Such a connection between shawabtis and food is not restricted to their long-time role as agricultural workers who provide sustenance in the afterlife by performing physical work. During the Middle Kingdom we find "shawabtis" with a *ḥtp dỉ nsw* formula running down the central strip on the lower half of the body; they are reciting a prayer for provisions.[26]

According to Miniaci, both coffins and shawabti were representations of the deceased at that time, the first containing and representing the deceased

during rituals and burial, the second acting as stand-ins for the deceased in a possible afterlife scenario in which the deceased is summoned to do agricultural/irrigation work in the afterlife. A *ḥtp dỉ nsw* offering request appeared as a popular coffin decoration of the Middle Kingdom full-sized memorials as well. Anthropoid coffins had a full-sized vertical central strip with the same text on the body/lid.[27] This has the same goal as similar prayers on shawabtis. It is a request from the deceased to Osiris for provisions to be given to him/her, i.e., "May you give me…." When the shawabtis on the walls of Irtieru's tomb utter a *ḥtp dỉ nsw*-like prayer for the provisioning of the queen, it is an informed reference to their earlier recitation from the Middle Kingdom, an expression of the need for food that likely precedes their association with the New Kingdom Book of the Dead 6 or even its forerunner, Coffin Text 472, where the text is focused on performing work for the shawabti's owner.[28] The Kushite understanding of the history of this text, enabling its re-establishment on painted reproductions of the original objects on which the texts appeared, shows a willingness to manipulate Egyptian content to their own purposes.

Although the connection between food and shawabtis continues into the New Kingdom, at least for royal personnages,[29] the use of *ḥtp dỉ nsw* on shawabtis was not common in Egypt in the Late Period. Irtieru's shawabtis are most likely not substitutes for the queen herself. The Middle Kingdom idea that they were stand-ins for the deceased is no longer applicable in the period immediately after Kushite rule in Egypt, and they were surely thought of primarily as servants by this time.[30] That may explain why the figures on Irtieru's wall were masculine, while her actual shawabtis are feminine, but it is more likely that the gender of the shawabtis is determined by the role they must play in the tomb's second narrative.[31]

Food-related texts and references to offerings elsewhere at Nuri, elsewhere in Sudan, and in Egypt are usually found in an above-ground mortuary chapel, where ritual provisioning by the deceased and offerings from friends, relatives, and priests took place. This was the original intended location for the shawabtis as well—as we know from the end of Coffin Text 472: "To be spoken over *an image of the owner as he was on earth* {namely, the shawabti itself}, *made of tamarisk or ziziphus wood and placed <in> the chapel of the deceased*."[32] Thus, the text identifies the proper resting place of the shawabti as the mortuary chapel. In any case, perhaps due to the absence of an offering chapel for Irtieru,[33] both the offering texts and the shawabtis have been relocated underground in her tomb.

We can see that the combined whole, a juxtaposition of shawabtis and offering texts located in a burial chamber is not a common occurrence in the Late Period, yet we can also see that it is really quite logical, that it is informed by practices in earlier time periods in Egypt, and that it can serve the deceased's primary needs for protection and sustenance very well. The format, figures and text columns with banner above, in which this juxtaposition occurs, indicates a recitation or performance of the text.

There are other similar uses of standing, mummified gods to provide a format for recitation. This format is a clue to understanding the second, richer narrative in the tomb.[34] An example can be seen in the two shawabti rooms in the tomb of Ramesses IV, known from its Egyptian label as the "shawabti chambers" in the Turin Tomb Papyrus.[35] The figures are separated by a line of text between the figures. There is no horizontal strip above them. The text consists of the name and titles of the king, which were probably intended to be repeated endlessly, as were Irtieru's requests for food and other necessaries. The contents of the vertical lines of hieroglyphs in front of the figures and the figures themselves function as speech bubbles, indicating spoken performance.

Irtieru's painted wall shawabtis are, like those of Ramesses IV, without agricultural tools or implements. Both groups look just like the judges depicted in several papyri showing the negative confession, and also in the tombs of Aspelta, Senkamanisken, and probably Anlamani.[36] When shown in later Meroitic tombs, the judges are often seated, with implements, and they are theriocephalic, which suggests that the portrayals of the Napatan period were taken from different sources than those of the later periods.[37]

This, then, is the first narrative: Irtieru was surrounded by protectors after death, and they recited requests for her provisioning in a ceremony. This ceremony was memorialized for eternity by showing the protective actual shawabtis, which usually stood on the floor around the chamber, painted oversize on the walls with the prayers they spoke on her behalf painted in columns in front of them. At the west end of the room is a scene showing Irtieru herself before Osiris, in which the queen

entreats for her provisions on her own behalf.

Interestingly, in addition to the similarity of the two rooms in the tomb of Ramesses IV with that of Irtieru, we can see this format in two other later Kushite tombs (Begrawiya S503 and 010), both at Meroe,[38] and both belonging to women. Both have similar rooms lined with mummified gods on the long walls. The texts follow the same theme as those in the tomb of Irtieru, namely food access in the afterlife. It appears that there was something about the decoration of Irtieru's tomb that spoke to women and their concerns, even generations later, and that something may well have been this focus on provisions for the afterlife. Janice Yellin will be discussing these Begarawiya tombs in forthcoming German Archaeological Institute/Qatari Mission for the Pyramids of Sudan (DAI/QMPS) publications.

In any case, we want to move along to yet another, defining example of this format. It is used in the second interpretation or narrative in the burial chamber of Irtieru and can be found in the burial chamber of Karakhamun in the Asasif. The second narrative helps to identify itself through the magic of *pars pro toto*. Except for the texts, which in Karakhamun's burial chamber come from the negative confession, the tomb chambers are identical, if not in size, at least in visual impression, and in its format.[39]

This second narrative, identifiable through the format and similarity in appearance of both tombs, is to some extent more important than the first, pictorial narrative in the sense that there are more documented examples of it, it was a very popular element of funerary ritual and motif at the time, and it is certainly better known to us. It is richer in allusions, references to other beliefs, and magic than the first narrative involving shawabtis. It too can be supported in the history of Egyptian funerary culture, which the Kushites have researched, as they researched other things. The creativity and scholarship in things Egyptian on which the Kushites relied to put together the burial chamber as described above are clearly evident in other tombs at Napata, particularly that of Tanutamani at Kurru.

Just as the tomb of Tanutamani presents what looks like a straightforward narrative in pictures at first but becomes much more complex when the texts and Kushite additions are examined in detail, so does the tomb of Irtieru leave us with dual narratives, a straightforward visual one and a more complex and subtle one. As a *pars pro toto* version of the negative confession, the Nuri burial chamber of Irtieru is best identified as such by its comparison to Karakhamun's (Theban tomb 223). A part of a story or narrative, namely, the format or vignette, and the text that fits into it, represent the full narrative. Thus, the vignette represents the negative confession in both tombs, and the text may belong to the negative confession (Kharakhamun) or not (Irtieru). Of course, in Irtieru's tomb, she has used a *ḥtp dỉ nsw*-style text, and it enables her to increase the benefits available to her through the tomb decoration. Just as this principle became more important on coffin decoration in the early Late Period, so could it be transferred to tomb situations, where limited space made it desirable to double or triple the blessings available to the deceased. An analogous situation can be found in the tomb of Tutankhamun, where two figures can, *pars pro toto*, constitute the entire ritual of the opening of the mouth.

To begin, let us consider the similarity of the decoration in the burial chamber of Irtieru and the burial chamber of Karakhamun (probably Nubian) in the Asasif (Theban tomb 223) (Fig. 2). In the Asasif tomb there are also rows of standing mummiform figures on the long walls. They carry no attributes. There is also an offering scene with Osiris on the west wall. This scene is partly destroyed, but the space in TT 223 was large enough for at least one more figure than Irtieru's tomb has, or perhaps the scale upon which the heart of the deceased was weighed. The text filling in the horizontal lines and vertical columns on the long walls before and above the mummiform figures is that of the negative confession from Book of the Dead 125, rather than Irtieru's simplified *ḥtp dỉ nsw*.[40] The deceased performed the negative confession for the judges, was judged to be telling the truth, and was admitted into the presence of Osiris.

Karakhamun's mummified figures (and Irtieru's) are the judges present at the negative confession, and show the format associated with it (Fig. 3).[41] Above the figures in both tombs, the long horizontal text streamer serves as an introduction to the content of the pendants. In Karakhamun's chamber, the deceased addresses each judge, giving his names and the deceased's negative confession, "I have not..." is recorded in those pendants. In Irtieru's tomb, the streamer is also an introduction, this time a brief *ḥtp dỉ nsw* as a prologue to the shawabtis' requests for the queen. The pendants contain the

FIGURE 2: The burial chamber of Karakhamun, TT 223 (photo courtesy of the South Asasif Conservation Project, under Elena Pischikova).

FIGURE 3: Judges from the tomb of Karakhamun, taken during early work (photo courtesy of Miguel A. Molinero).

prayers for provisions, that is, specifics to the introduction in the horizontal lines. The purpose of the horizontal is identical to that in Karakhamun's tomb.

That these texts are often quite uncomplicated and direct is shown in a scene of the deceased before Osiris just after she has been declared justified, or true of voice, from the papyrus of Tayesnakht (Ptolemaic), in the Egyptian Museum in Turin. Her entreaty on her own behalf is similar to Iriertu's and points to the idea that Irtieru's offering scene is typical of a post-judgment prayer to Osiris in this period and is not a generic offering scene without a particular context, which is the role it seems to play in the first narrative.[42] The texts in Tayesnakht's papyrus also show that judges in the Late Period did address Osiris on behalf of the deceased, using the first few lines of a *ḥtp dì nsw*.[43] Above a seated Osiris in Tayesnakht's tomb is the request for "invocation offerings of bread and beer, beef and fowl, and every beautiful thing," which, while it is not a unique request, echoes what Irtieru says on her west wall, corroborating that this scene is associated with the judgment. Above the figure of Thoth is a recitation by him as the divine scribe asking for the ability for Tayesnakht to enter and leave the Duat (as she wishes), forever.

Thoth reports the status of Tayesnakht's confession to the assessors/judges and states that she is to be given sustenance. They respond that he has spoken the truth and that the deceased should receive the sustenance that is normally given in this situation. The judges or assessors are thus in charge of the release of provisions in that they approve his statement, and they request that release in Irtieru's tomb. Incidentally, the flowers in the bouquets of both scenes, although hardly visible in the photos of either Nuri 53 or TT 223, are of a similar, "square" style that is not uncommon in papyri scenes of the Hall of Judgment in the period and perhaps suggests that the model for these scenes was a papyrus.

Another interesting parallel to the presence of the format in the Asasif and Nuri tombs is the coffin of Ditankh in Cairo.[44] It also uses the text of the negative confession, has a running horizontal pennant above the figures of the assessors standing around the head end of the box, each with a pendant text column naming the assessor and asserting that the owner of the coffin has not committed the crime associated with that judge. Cairo 41.060, the coffin of Ditankh, is simply an earlier coffin version of the burial chamber of Karakhamun and Irtieru, and it reminds us that burial chambers in this period often looked to coffins as sources of texts and illustrations. The curved ceilings of the Kushite burial chambers are certainly reminiscent of the inside curves of the typical lid for a *kereset* sarcophagus. Ditankh lies in her coffin just as Irtieru and Karakhamun lie in their burial chambers, surrounded by the assessors. They all will, with the help of the figures surrounding them, receive sustenance from Osiris, although by two very different approaches.[45]

Despite the fact that the texts in the burial chambers of Karakhamun and Irtieru are not the same, theoretically creating two quite different scenarios for their basically identical burial chambers, there is a concept that brings the two chambers much closer in their meaning for the deceased. It is the principle of *pars pro toto*: the judges and offering scene are sufficient to represent the whole negative confession for Irtieru, even if none of the texts is included. Many coffins and papyri of the Late Period begin to "shed" text and replace long texts with vignettes. On coffins, the scene of weighing the heart and the judges usually do not include the text, due to the limited space, yet this does not vitiate the efficacy of the texts.

The burial chambers of Karakhamun and Irtieru coincide with the beginnings of a revival of interest in Egypt in the use of the judgment scene during the Late Period. It remained a popular motif in the later Sudanese kingdom as well. In addition to seated judges, the scale scene was incorporated into the decoration of some groups of chapels into the Meroitic period.[46]

We might ask why Irtieru's tomb lacks the text for the moral element of the Osirian judgement—namely, the negative confession—and substitutes for it these "mundane" requests for food. The answer lies partially in, first, the principle of *pars pro toto*, which makes it possible for Irtieru to benefit from the entire judgment because part of it is present. The second, and equally important point, is that food allocations are actually an explicit part of the benefits of a judgment of innocence. The focus on attaining provisions after judgment is quite clear. The deceased is acquitted and steps right into the well-furnished booth of Osiris, as we saw above.

A reaffirmation of the age and sanctity of this belief lies in the comprehensive narrative from the papyrus of Ani, in the label for the scene in which Ani is brought before Osiris. When Horus announces that

Ani is free of guilt, he says immediately that Ani thus becomes eligible for food rations from the offering tables of the gods. Holding Ani's hand, Horus approaches the Hall of Judgment, saying,

> I have come to you, O Wennefer (labelled "Osiris, Lord of Eternity"), and I bring Ani to you. His heart is true, having gone forth from the balance, and he has not sinned against any god or goddess. Thoth has judged him in writing which has been told to the Ennead,[47] and Maat the great has witnessed…. Let there be given to him the bread and beer which have been issued in the presence of Osiris.... [48]

In the next scene, Ani, now an Osiris himself, is seen kneeling before an offering table laden with meat, bread, and beer.[49] Whether the judges make the decision about the guilt or innocence of the deceased, or whether they merely approve the decision made by Thoth, it is their approval that triggers the availability of offerings for the supplicant. Their approval charges Horus with the task of reporting to Osiris that the candidate has been successful and that access to sustenance should be granted. Thus, the judges themselves, by approving the release of provisions to the deceased via Osiris, are the key to Irtieru's receipt of eternal food offerings. It is perfectly in keeping, then, for the judges in her burial chamber to request food for her directly from Osiris. *Rather than perceiving the loss of the text as diminishing or invalidating this version of the negative confession, Irtieru has simply chosen to concentrate on the end results of her judgment (access to provisions) rather than the process of achieving that access (reciting the confession, enduring the weighing of her heart scene with the monster, etc.).*

Without a chapel, Irtieru, or her father or husband or a priest on her behalf, had to be creative in meeting her eternal need for provisions. Whatever one wanted in a tomb would have to be reduced to the space allotted for queens. The solution was twofold: first the resurrection of an old belief about shawabtis helping to provide provisions, and second, an innovative use of a popular religious concept available for the space because of the principle of *pars pro toto*. Creating the room required an in-depth understanding of this time-honored recitation, the negative confession. Irtieru may have known something about it, if she had lived in Egypt. The judgment also plays a large part in the tomb of Tanutamani, who, as we saw before, may have been her father. As we can see from his tomb, it took place during the night before burial, and a number of texts on Tanutamani's west wall provided him with the magic needed to make sure that his heart did not betray him at the crucial moment. The scale and Osiris are not pictured, but because of the texts we know that the judgment scene is present.

Irtieru's solutions were typically ingenious Napatan methods of fulfilling needs for the afterlife. The queen needed provisions, and she will have wanted the moral benefits of the judgment, plus the perquisites of a beautifully painted chamber which could provide all that and impress her social circle as well. If she had lived in Egypt, she would probably have been in a position to appreciate the intricacies of her tomb design. We cannot be sure who it was at court, but someone there understood that, with a slight refocusing of the chosen format, her tomb could tell two stories and it would be possible for her to be defended, nourished, and spiritually prepared for eternity, thus satisfying her Egyptian and Napatan needs for the afterlife.

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Notes

1 The author would like to thank Pearce Paul Creasman, Janice Yellin, and Rita Freed for their help and support in the writing of this paper. Irtieru's tomb was published by Dunham (1955, 35 and *passim*), where she is known as Yeturow. For Janssen's view in support of both Dunham and Reisner, who thought she was the daughter of Taharka, see Janssen 1953, 24. For a view to the contrary, see Dodson and Hilton 2004, 237–238. For collected information on Irtieru throughout her volume, see Lohwasser 2001.

2 Doll 1978. I am now working on updating some parts of this. See also Doll 2014.

3 Ranke 1935a, 42 no. 10.

4 Ranke 1935b, 224.

5 See Note 1 for bibliography.

6 Morkot 2000, 290.

7 Griffiths 1929.

8 Vittmann 2007, 153. The name, according to Vittmann's description of the use of Egyptian names at this period, suggests she had a position in an Egyptian cult. Interestingly, our Irtieru's name is the same as that of the owner of Theban tomb 390, who was a woman of high position and scribe for the God's Wife Nitocris from the early Twenty-sixth Dynasty. She is mentioned again below.

9 Griffiths 1929, 26–28; Lohwasser 2001, 147–8. This writer sees the name Asata as possibly related to "Isis," *I(w)-s(a)-t(a)*. Although admittedly the spelling does not necessarily support this, it is possible to make a case for its being an attempt to spell alphabetically with syllables in a context where there was much variation in the reproduction of names. See Note 14 for more on spelling variants.

10 Lohwasser 2001, 156.

11 For some of the names, see Macadam and Dunham 1949. For a male with the name Irtieru of a period slightly earlier, see Figueirdo 2005, 437–449.

12 See Note 47.

13 Ayad 2020, 273–283.

14 Personal communication from Dr. Janice Yellin. Additionally, the monuments and inscriptions of Anlamani and Aspelta also have some inconsistencies in their uses of titles. These "inconsistences" include spellings, the order in which titles appear, and the fact that not all titles are present in every location where they might be expected to appear. Budka's remarks on difficulties finding and regularizing spellings for Kushite names have some bearing on the spelling of this name in Napatan hieroglyphs (Budka 2010, 509–510, especially 514). Also, Vittmann (2007, 147) pointed out that the use of titles was not universal or consistent among foreigners at this time, although he was talking about private persons.

15 This is Kurru 6, not published in much detail, and it appears to have been similar to Qalhata's tomb, and thus Tanutamani's; see Dunham 1950, 42, where he describes Kurru 6 as having "traces plaster and ptd. dec. as in Kurru 5 (belonging to Qalhata)."

16 See Dodson and Hilton 2004, 237–238.

17 See the report by the Nuri Archaeological Expedition in Strong et al. 2021. The first report on Irtieru was, of course, by Dows Dunham, referenced in Note 1.

18 The directional designations for the walls are based on traditional orientations and not necessarily on actual geographical orientations. As a result, the mummiform figures are described here as standing on the north and south sides of the bier, i.e., on the long sides of the room, as the *Stundenwachen*, or hour watch, does in the tombs of Tanutamani and Qalhata during the night before burial. The long side of a coffin or sarcophagus is also the side with the lines of protective figures during this period. Visually, the bodies of Anlamani and Aspelta, for example, are cordoned off from danger by the standing figures on the long sides of their sarcophagus boxes. This is an extremely common feature in sarcophagi and coffins of the period, and it reminds us of the parallels between them and some of the burial chambers at this time. The identity of the figures may vary.

[19] See NOTE 17.

[20] This is not the only way to understand and identify the figures, and we will see a second interpretation later in this paper. For an earlier view of shawabtis as protective in Kush, see Balanda 2020, 129 ff. For the format of large painted shawabtis, explicitly labeled as such, lining rooms plus a column of text between each (but not with the same content that we see in the tomb of Irtieru), see the shawabti rooms in the tomb of Ramesses IV, discussed at more length in NOTE 34.

[21] See Taylor 2001, 131, fig. 94, for evidence that the lining up of shawabtis around the walls of the room, a staple of scholarly lists of specifically Napatan practices, is not restricted to Kush. The practice apparently follows contemporary fashion in Egypt at certain locations.

[22] A word for shawabti at this period in Egypt was *ḥm*, which had a previously established meaning of "slave" or "servant," i.e., manpower to do the master's bidding, whether in the house or fields. This meaning is the one that is operative in the change Miniaci (2014, 249) sees in the role of the shawabti. Balanda and Miniaci both see the Nesikhons Decree as showing the change in the functions of shawabtis, namely, their increasing role as protectors.

[23] Haynes and Leprohon 1987, showing their agricultural attributes along with their unique Kushite features.

[24] Balanda 2020, 129.

[25] Miniaci 2014, 255, 270. In a time when the shawabti figure is believed to be a worker, it makes sense to have as many as possible, which (partially?) explains the larger numbers of shawabtis in tombs during the Third Intermediate Period, the Twenty-fifth Dynasty, and the Late and Napatan periods. Servant and slave shawabtis by the hundreds could be expected to assist in providing their owner with the all-important protection as well.

[26] D'Auria et al. 1988, cat, nos. 57, 62 (sarcophagus), and 64. We see these texts on much later sarcophagi as well (see Taylor 2001, fig. 155, left). I include the coffins and sarcophagi with *ḥtp dỉ nsw* formulae down the center with shawabtis here as they are visually so similar to the Middle Kingdom shawabtis and model coffins (see Miniaci 2014, 257).

[27] Miniaci 2014, 257.

[28] Or perhaps even before Coffin Text 472.

[29] A New Kingdom shawabti (of Amenhotep III) does ask for food, requesting the gods to provide for the king. At this point in time, the shawabti is a sort of stand-in for the owner, who is the king, so in a sense the king is asking for himself. This is not a piece at all likely to have directly inspired Irtieru's burial chamber, but it does show the strong connection between shawabtis and food requests lasting into the New Kingdom at least (see Scalf 2017, 320, cat. no. 24).

[30] Miniaci 2014, 265.

[31] Always keeping in mind that we are talking about only the first of the two interpretations I intend to discuss in this paper. In order for there to be consistency with the second interpretation, as we shall see below, there could be no other type of figure used. The shawabtis have to be standing male mummies with no accompanying symbols in order for them to match the judges (and they are), as interpreted in the second narrative which is a version of the negative confession as shown in the tombs of Senkamanisken, Anlamani, and Aspelta. See NOTE 36.

[32] Faulkner 1977, 106.

[33] Dunham 1955, 35. No trace of a chapel was found, either by Reisner or Pearce Paul Creasman. (Strong et al. 2021, 201).

[34] As previously stated, this group of Kushite tombs can be read on two levels: first, what story the pictures tell (e.g., Story 1 = protection and sustenance are provided by two- and three-dimensional shawabtis), and second, in which the texts and pictures together communicate additional information (e.g., Story 2 = justification is achieved and the afterlife is well provisioned through the actions of the assessors in the Judgment Hall of Osiris). Both of these stories must be realized for Irtieru to have her "best" afterlife, since each story is a little different.

[35] Carter and Gardiner 1917.

[36] Similar figures are shown in other tombs at Nuri in connection with the negative confession,

including the tabular-style representations in the tombs of Senkamanisken, Anlamani, and Aspelta and in papyri of the period (Dunham 1955, pls. XIV, XV, XXIX; for a papyrus example, see Scalf 2017, 320; Taylor 2010, 60, fig. 20, 218, 102). In the tabular format, each confession text is paired with a judge and the whole takes up a column of space. The figures are placed in the center of each column of text, so that together they stand in a row, one behind the other, facing in the same direction. In other words, they look much like the walls of Irtieru's burial chamber, or, rather, the walls of her chamber look like the lined-up rows of judges in the tabular formats. See the discussion on whether there was a performance of the negative confession at graveside by Stadler (2001, 331–348).

37 For judgment scenes in Kush with theriocephalic gods, see Chapman and Dunham, 1952, pls. 4, 6, 7, 10, 11, 16, 19, and 20; also, a photo in Budge 1907, 399.

38 Namely, Begarawiya S503 and 010. (Dunham 1957, pls. XIII and XV).

39 Many examples can be seen in the tomb of Tanutamani.

40 Some judgment hall scenes have been placed at the beginnings of papyri, often showing the weighing of the heart, i.e., thereby creating a situation where textual information about this ritual experience (the negative confession) can be located in Book of the Dead 125, and a full scene with the scale might be located at the beginning of the papyrus. The events in the night before burial happen consecutively, however, and are not separated by time. Polo 2014, 269 ff.

41 The texts are barely visible in the publication (Cartwright 2015).

42 This is a Ptolemaic papyrus in the Egyptian Museum in Turin (Turin 1833). For a study of this scene, see Seeber 1976, 227.

43 Notes and translation of part of the judgment scene of Tayesnakht made by the writer from a photo in 2019.

44 Gauthier 1913, pl. 28, no. 41.060.

45 Teeter 1999, 405–414, 408. Teeter briefly discusses Ditankh, who was mentioned above. She was a singer in the interior of the house of Amun and a woman who might have lived the sort of life Irtieru could have lived if she had remained in Egypt. Her coffin box uses the negative-confession scene with judges protectively cordoning her off from dangerous forces in the same way they do in Irtieru's tomb. It is possible that this duplication of the way the protective burial of Irtieru was pictured and memorialized in her tomb and the way Ditankh's was pictured on her coffin reflects some sort of connection of some kind between Ditankh and the Sudanese Irtieru. It certainly shows how a burial chamber and a coffin can utilize the same scenes and re-create the same three-dimensional depiction of reality. Also see Doll 1978, 369, for the use of texts and motifs from coffins of Ditankh's group and a group of priests of Montu on the sarcophagi of Anlamani and Aspelta.

46 For a few uses of the weighing and judgment scenes, see Chapman and Dunham 1952, pls. 4, 6, 7, 10, 11, 16, 19, and 20.

47 The Ennead constitutes a group within the collection of judges, and informing them is equivalent to informing all the judges. The increasing popularity of the idea and its resulting incorporation later into the new religion of Christianity do suggest that doing good/social morality was a growing area of interest in religious belief. To the classical world, the Kushites were known for their piety. Could the continued references to the negative confession in tombs at Meroe (mostly reliefs of the judges, weighing, and scales) be somehow related to this?

48 Faulkner and Goelet, 1998, pl. 4, from Book of the Dead 30B.