



DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.192840

TRAVELING WITHIN PHARAONIC EGYPT FOR DISCOVERING THE PAST

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Received: 24/10/2016

Accepted: 11/12/2016

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to assess to what degree were archaeological visits in ancient Egypt is regarded as visits of historical or touristical purpose. Research questions include: Who traveled, where and why? The accessibility of the visited places, the preferred season for such visits, the visitors' ethics in relation to the ancient monuments, the provisions carried with them and the preferable means of travel will be discussed. Evidence for those visits will be discussed, followed by analytical argument.

KEYWORDS: Archaeological visits, category, motivations and ethics of visitors, carried provisions, means of travel.

1. INTRODUCTION

Archaeological visits have long existed in ancient Egypt, my aim is to assess to what extent were those visits viewed as visits of historical or touristical purpose? Much like contemporary times ancient people travelled around for various purposes. The research attempts to answer further questions such as sites visited (where?), the identity of the ancient travellers and their social standing (who?) and the motivation for travel (why?). How accessible were the visited places? What was the preferred season for such visits? What was the visitors' ethics towards the ancient monuments? What were the provisions carried with them and what was the preferable means of travel?

Evidence of travel is shown in numbers of New Kingdom graffiti and inscriptions, written in both hieroglyphic and hieratic scripts. Among sites visited were Memphis, Saqqara (Peden, 2001), Thebes (Kitchen, 1982), Beni Hasan, Abusir, Dahshur, and Meidum (Navrátilová, 2011, p. 257).

A visitors' graffiti (Firth & Quibell, 1935; KRI III, 148; Wildung, 1969; Kitchen, 1982, Peden, 2001) in year 47 from the reign of Ramesses II was written in the South Chapel of the Step Pyramid Complex by the Treasury-Scribe, Hednakhte. The text reads: "*Year 47, 2 peret 25, There came the Treasury-Scribe Hednakhte, son of Sunero, his mother being Twosret, to stroll (swtwt) and to enjoy (sDA-Hr)(himself) on the West of Memphis, together with his brother, Panakhte, the scribe of the vizier..... (Written) by the Treasury-Scribe of the Lord of the Two Lands, Hednakhte, Justified, and the Scribe Panakhte*".

Another Graffito (KRI III, 439; Firth & Quibell, 1935; 79D; Negm, 1998, p. 118) of the Scribes Re [], Amenmose and Huy inscribed on the Step Pyramid, it runs: "*Year 14, 4th month of winter, day 21. Day of the visit (made) by the Scribe Re [.....], the Scribe Amenmose the Scribe Huy, so that they might see <the temple of> Djoser, justified, as they [.....]*".

One would like to highlight Who were the social class or categories of people who made those visits?

2. CATEGORIES OF VISITORS

2.1. *The First Category of Visitors were Scribes*

Scribes' administrative career enabled them to move to employment places as required. They were holding positions such as scribe of the treasury and scribe of the vizier. Texts reflect how these scribes viewed their jobs, boasting before their colleagues with typical expressions for their abilities and proficiency as 'scribe of skilled fingers' and 'scribe that has no equals' (Firth & Quibell, 1935; Navrátilová,

2011; Navrátilová, 2013). Places and kings' names mentioned in the graffiti suggest that history and geography were part of the New Kingdom scribes' education, where scribes were able to show their knowledge about the former sovereigns by scribbling their titles and names in the graffiti (Navrátilová, 2011). A well-known scribe was Nebnetjeru who left graffiti from Kalabsha and Dendur till Toshka (Černý, 1947). Most of those scribes were suggested by Wildung (1973, p. 74) to be locals who were able to associate the knowledge they gained in their education about the past with the local information about the monuments they visited. They might have the chance to rest from work done close by at the places they visited that allowed them scribbling memorial notes for their visit (Navrátilová, 2011), documented probably to be esteemed within the elite (Baines, 2002).

2.2. *The Second Category of Visitors were Teachers and their Students*

The curiosity in past kings and ancient monuments was not just limited to scribes, but even, teachers with their students (Helck, 1952; Kitchen, 1982; El-Menshawy, 2015) experienced history taught in schools by school excursions to the ancient monuments. Our evidence is an interesting graffiti on the Userkaf Sun Temple, preserved in two fragments US 74, which dates to the 18th dynasty. The text reads (Navrátilová, 2007, p. 39):

1. excellent saying...
2. Came to amuse [themselves ?] in the desert of Memphis
3. Found its inside beautiful like heavenin ... old age (?)
4. northern wind?
5. ... Loveliness akhet period....
6. ...of the school ..
7. ...fragments."

The text indicates that the school excursions of the New Kingdom to ancient monuments probably included a kind of history education and cultural knowledge within the context of school training (Helck, 1952; Helck, 1987; Elfert & Werner, 2003; El-Menshawy, 2015). In the New Kingdom and the Ramesside period teachers trained school children to study literary texts from earlier periods (Verhoeven, 2012; Fischer & Hans 2003). Subjects dealt with included the names of the Kings from the Old Kingdom, our evidence is a wooden board dated to the Ramesside period with six kings' names written with no chronological order, which highlights that the teachers were familiar with the names of the previous kings (Gardiner, 1935; Saleh, 2006; El-Menshawy, 2015). Also a training school writing tab-

let preserved from the time of Ramesses II, with the names of nine kings from the 18th Dynasty names written on it, and the first three kings of the 19th Dynasty, in chronological order, besides writing the names of the kings Montuhotep II and Horemhab on the other side of the writing tablet (Sauneron, 1951; Saleh, 2006; El-Menshaw, 2015). They also taught school students historical events, our evidence is a plate from the Ramesside period with the story of the struggle against the Hyksos and lessons from the Instructions of Amenmhat I (Lichtheim, 1975; Quirke, 1996; El-Menshaw, 2015). This would suggest transmitting the knowledge of the past, curiosity in the past and further usage of it where Redford (1986, p. 5) noted that *“the knowledge of things past seems to have been praised and was therefore culturally and socially acknowledged during the New Kingdom”*.

2.3. *The Third category of visitors were Officers and a Royal Herald*

A graffiti on the Sun Temple of Userkaf, dating to Thutmose III, preserved on fragment US 68 (Helck, 1952), reads (Navrátilová, 2007, p. 31):

0.-1. “[dating] under the Majesty of the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Menkheperre, Son of Re Thutmose - Neferkheperu, living for ever and ever. As His Majesty was in Syria

2. [he] trampled the lands of the Fenkhu and Hurrians in their place as was the command of his father, Amun-Re, King of Gods (Amonrasonth).

3. [there came] the royal herald Amunedjeh to see this pyramid. The Brewer and those of beer [production] ...scribe ?

4.m-pet, Amenhotep, Scribe Mentuhotep, Scribe Djehutiemhat, Humesh,

5. traces of names and a title [scribe?]”

This graffito indicates a group of officials who came to visit the pyramid equally as modern tourists do. The graffito is written by the royal herald Amunedjeh, during the joint rule of Hatshepsut and Thutmose III. Amunedjeh himself explained his role controlling, organizing and directing of the movements between the court and the outside (Urk. IV, 940/1; Urk IV, 966,4- 969,14). Amunedjeh inscribed in his tomb that he has a desire for visitors to come to his tomb and read his inscriptions and utter offering formulae for him (Urk. IV, 939-941; Navrátilová, 2007).

2.4. *Khaemwaset as Visitor and Preserver of Heritage*

During the 19th Dynasty, Khaemwaset, the 4th son of King Ramesses II and the high-priest known as the sem-priest of Ptah at Memphis showed interest in Old Kingdom monuments. Evidence of ar-

chaeological visits are to the Pyramids at Saqqara and Giza (Wildung, 1969; Gomaá, 1973; Kitchen, 1982; Malek, 1992; Peden, 2001; El-Menshaw, 2015).

Kitchen (1982, p. 107) stated: *“He was no doubt impressed by the superb workmanship of the splendid monuments of a thousand years before- and perhaps also depressed by their state of neglect, mounded up in drifts of sand, temples fallen into ruin. Deeply affected by all that he had seen, Khaemwaset resolved to clear these glories of antiquity of the encumbering sand, tidy their temples, and renew the memory (and perhaps the cults) of the ancient kings”*. Therefore, Khaemwaset conducted commissions to inspect the king’s names and to inscribe a standard inscription on the face of each pyramid suggested by Kitchen as “museum labels”, stating the name of the ancient king, Ramesses II as sponsor and Khaemwaset decree as restorer. Those labels were inscribed on monuments at Saqqara and Giza (Kitchen; 1982), although Kitchen (1982, p. 107) stated that Herodotus’s guide read a restoration inscription inscribed on the great pyramid of Khufu eight centuries later (Kitchen; 1982; Peden, 2001) yet revisiting the text indicates that his guide was obviously making it up and not reading it !

A preserved decree of prince Khaemwaset reads (Kitchen; 1982, p. 107): *“His Majesty decreed an announcement (thus):- ‘It is the High Priest (of Ptah), the Sem-priest, Prince Khaemwaset, who has perpetuated the name of the king ... (So-and-so). Now his name was not found upon the face of his pyramid. Very greatly did the Sem-priest, Prince Khaemwaset, desire to restore the monuments of the Kings of Upper and Lower Egypt, because of what they had done, the strength of which (monuments) was falling into decay. He (i.e. Khaemwaset) set forth a decree for its (the pyramid’s) sacred offerings,...its water...[endowed] with a grant of land, together with its personnel...”*. The text alludes to Khaemwaset’s genuine concern in his country’s history, which makes him order to restore a serious of ancient monuments (Dietrich, 1969; Peden, 2001; El-Menshaw, 2015). Wildung (1969, p. 170) stated that Khaemwaset must have taken pride in the ancient monuments that he visited and believed in the power of the kings’ who have built them.

Another evidence is a statue of Prince Kaweb (Smith, 1949; Stevenson, 1949) – the son of king Khufu - which was found in 1908 by Quibel at Mit Rahynah, now preserved in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo and has JE 40431 number. It represents him in a sitting position, although the upper part of the statue is broken, and only the lower part and the arms are left. On the other outer three sides of the statue shown 16 lines of vertical inscriptions written during the time of Khaemwaset boasting that he was able to save and drag this statue from a debris mastaba as a gift to his father king of Upper and Lower

Egypt Khufu (Gomaá, 1973). In this case Khaemwaset was able to attribute the statue to the prince Kaweb, although there was no inscribed names on the statue, probably for having the name of Kawab on other statues nearby (Gomaá, 1973). Gomaá (1973, p. 66) highlighted the position of Khaemwaset as High priest of Memphis, which assisted him in studying the documents situated in Memphis temples' archives and which accordingly encouraged him to document the ancient monuments under the auspices of his father Ramesses II, that is why Kitchen (1982, p. 107) described him the world's first Egyptologist. One would suggest that Prince Khaemwaset possessed a cultural and religious sense of appreciation and respect to the ancestors' tombs that led him order to restore them. These archeological investigations would also reflect his admiration and personal interest of the achievements of his ancestors heritage in the Old Kingdom (El-Menshawy, 2015).

3. VISITORS' MOTIVES

One would question Why the visitors made those visits and what was their motives? The motives for the visit is written on the monuments before or during the Ramesside period. An example comes from Thebes in year 17 of the reign of Ramesses II, where the scribe Paser visited the 11th Dynasty tomb-chapel of Khety --a high official during the reign of Mentuhotep II--some 700 years before to his time, "to see the monument of his ancestor". He also visited the tomb of Ken-Amun, around 150 years earlier to his time. He liked a scene of a musician, writing a comment graffiti "Very beautiful" (Kitchen, 1982).

The multiple purposes of the visits, scribbled on the monuments would be: 'to see the beauty' of the antique monuments, to inspect from a sense of curiosity about the great monuments of an earlier age (Wildung, 1975), to pay their respect and to honor the memories of famed monarchs of the Old Kingdom, to communicate with future generations and to offer prayers to gods (Kitchen; 1982; Peden, 2001, Franke, 2001, Navrátilová, 2007). These Visitors' graffiti are written communication records, with an informal writing atmosphere (Reisner, 1974; Peden, 2001) where Negm has suggested that these graffiti could be attributed to religious tourism (Negm, 1998).

4. ACCESS TO ANCIENT MONUMENTS

Probably the tombs and temples were easy to get to. The position of the visitors' graffiti of the pyramid complex of Djoser suggest either a standing (Navrátilová, 2013), sitting or squatting position since the height of the graffiti covering the walls scales between 0.5 to two meters and above. Therefore, it is probable that these places were kept

cleaned from sand to retain access and allow visitors to enter (Sadek, 1990; Navrátilová, 2011; Navrátilová, 2013). While building the funerary temple of Queen Hatshepsut, the workers covered the XIth Dyansty tomb TT 319 of princess Nefru by mistake. To permit access to this tomb a new "tourist" entrance was then hewn to the right of the main courtyard doorway, which allowed visiting scribes to scribble graffiti on its walls. This incident shows keenness to have access to past monuments (Peden, 2001).

5. PREFERRED SEASON FOR THE VISITS

It seems that the weather was considered in such visits, the favorite season for such visits was the winter (KRI III 439; KRI III, 140; KRI III 437; PM III 79 (12)), yet, visits were also conducted during summer (Verhoeven, 2012). For example, at Saqqara, at the step pyramid, the visitors graffiti were found in two main shady areas: the walls of the North and the walls of the South Chapels, as cool places to shelter and protect the visitors from the sun heat (Negm, 1998; Verhoeven, 2012).

6. ETHICS OF THE VISITORS

Although, some visitors scribbled their graffiti on plain surfaces (Navrátilová, 2013), yet, curses (Morschauer, 1991) bears warnings to other visitors who might cause destruction to the texts and carvings. One such text reads (Urk VII 53, 10-12): "As for any person, any scribe, any learned man, any commoner, any low-born person who shall come to dishonor this tomb, (or) who shall erase its writing, (or) who shall obliterate its images.....". The threat text is warning the visitors not to damage its writings or erase its images, or steal its contents, which might reflect the expectation of bad behavior from the visitors (Mrsich, 1996).

7. PROVISIONS CARRIED WITH VISITORS

It is more likely that those visitors or travelers often carried their provisions with them in their tour to the tombs or temples (Köpp-Junk, 2013), resembling those who goes in a tour today, since a threat text on the walls of the tomb of Ty (Garnot, 1938) from the 5th Dynasty, warns all people entering this tomb who are impure and eats what one hates from food, that the owner of the tomb will sue them in front of the greatest God in the place of the judgment there. Also in the Tale of the Eloquent Peasant the text reads (Lichtheim, 1975, p. 170 (5)): "This peasant said to his wife: "Look here, I am going down to Egypt to bring food from there for my children.....Now make for me these six gallons of barely into bread and beer for every day in which [I shall travel]". One would argue that when visitors travel without the basic provisions from food, they have to buy them along the

road. Economics of travel can be viewed in market scenes, although it is unusual theme in New Kingdom tombs, yet they appear in New Kingdom Theban tombs (Pino, 2005). In the tomb of Ipuy (TT 217) (PM I, 1, 316 (5, III); Davies, 1937) is a depiction of market-quay side scene, where men are shown leaving the boat, moored in the center, carrying bags of grain. There shown woman exchanging bread and wine for cereals and two women exchanging bread for grain. Fresh water was supplied by the river Nile who travelled close to the Nile or by using sinking wells for fresh water en-route (Partridge; 1996).

8. MEANS OF TRAVEL

For long distances travelling on water was preferred. In the Westcar Papyrus, Prince Djedef-hor went to meet the magician Djedi. The text reads (Lichtheim, 1975, p. 218): “Now the majesty of king Khufu had been spending time searching for the secret chambers of the sanctuary of Thot in order to copy them for his temple. Said his majesty: “You yourself, Hardedef, my son, shall bring him to me!” Ships were made ready for Prince Hardedef. He journeyed upstream to Djed-Snefru. After the ships had been moored to the shore, he travelled overland seated in a carrying chair of ebony, the poles of which were of ssnDm -wood plated with gold. Now when he had reached Djedi, the carrying chair was set down”. Although it is a fiction text, however, One would suggest that visitors used the same traffic system on boat (Vinson, 1994) by water (Partridge, 1996), carried on land (Partridge, 1996; Köpp-Junk, 2006) and walking (Partridge, 1996; Köpp-Junk, 2006).

9. CONCLUSION

In conclusion educated classes of people i.e. scribes, teachers with their students, officers and princes as Khaemwaset showed keen interest in the past-seeing the sights—and demonstrate historical awareness, where they left us evidence –graffiti & inscriptions- on the walls of the tombs and temples of Memphis, Saqqara, Thebes, Beni Hasan, Abusir, Dahshur, and Meidum (See Figure 1).

Could they be regarded as the world’s first tourist as Kitchen (1982) has described them? Although, Köpp-Junk (2006) argued that touristic travel is rare in ancient Egypt, yet one would support Kitchen’s suggestion based on the visitors’ intention for travel, which was associated with curiosity to see and dis-

cover the ancient monuments, desire to relax and socializing with people, therefore testifying their desire to visit those heritage sites probably for antiquarian reasons (Bausinger, 1991; Köpp-Junk, 2013). The idea that the traveler or the visitor would return to his point of departure also exits (Baines, 2007).

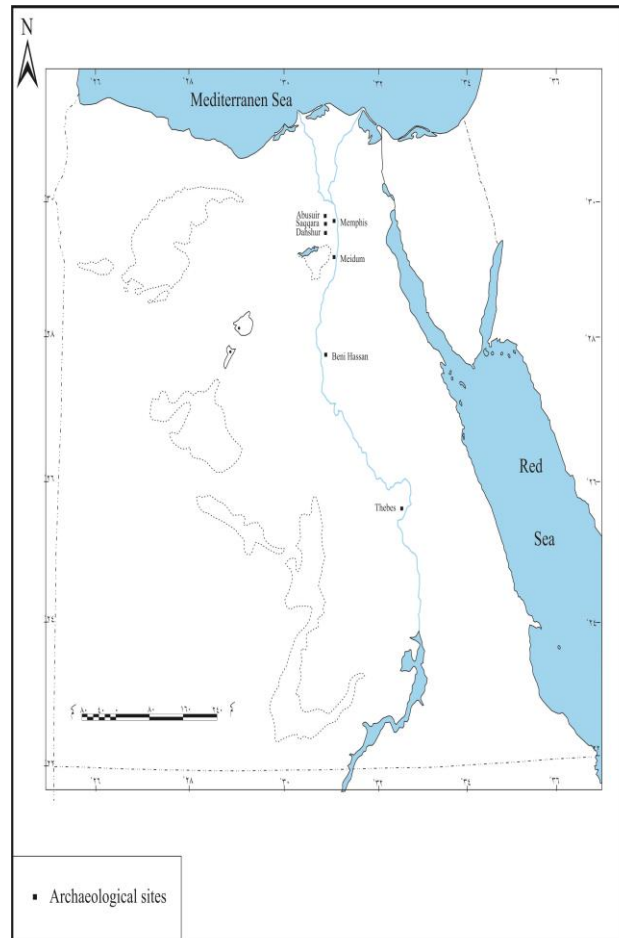


Figure 1. Map indicating major visited sites

Also, one would argue that they made educational and recreational trips to explore and learn from one’s past. Texts indicate that they travelled in groups presumably to decrease the risks that might face them in their trips (Parkinson, 1997; Köpp-Junk, 2013), going on an excursion carrying with them provisions of food and drink, interacting, socializing somehow, and recording remarks on the walls of the temples and tombs they visit.

Like some travelers in modern days, they needed to unearth and satisfy their needs to understand and appreciate their ancestor’s legacies’.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks are extended to Dr. Christopher Eyre (Liverpool University) for his comments and reading the final draft. I am thankful to Dr. Sayed Said, Associate Professor at Humanities Department, Qatar University for

drawing the map. I appreciate the help of Miss Lana Alsabbag, Library office (Qatar University) and Mrs Nora Ali, Administrative Coordinator, Humanities Department (Qatar University).

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