

On some movements of the royal court in New Kingdom Egypt

Hagen, Frederik Norland

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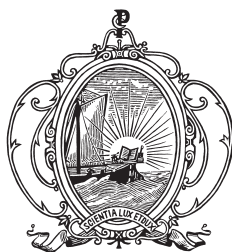
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ANOTHER MOUTHFUL OF DUST

Egyptological Studies
in Honour of
Geoffrey Thorndike Martin

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ON SOME MOVEMENTS OF THE ROYAL COURT IN NEW KINGDOM EGYPT

Fredrik HAGEN

Introduction

The royal court of New Kingdom Egypt has been the subject of extensive research in recent years, perhaps best exemplified by the considerable body of material published as proceedings of regular symposia in the series *Beiträge zur altägyptischen Königsideologie*.¹ The attention given to this area of elite culture in ancient Egypt is mirrored in other historical disciplines; as the most powerful individual in a country, the king, and the significant number of high officials and staff that surrounds him, generally forms the centre of the physical and ideological setting within which political history unfolds. Geoffrey T. Martin's work has often revolved around the funerary context of those individuals constituting the Egyptian royal court in the New Kingdom, especially at Amarna, Saqqara and the Valley of the Kings, and I hope that this modest contribution to the history of that institution will be of interest to him.

The purpose of this article is to look at the evidence for the movements of the king and his court in Egypt during the New Kingdom, not in terms of where the "capital" of any given period might be located, but rather movement as it relates to the semi-regular travelling throughout the country by a head of state. I focus on a set of relatively unknown references in administrative documents, and relate these to other contemporary sources for royal progresses or peregrinations. The sources are few and fragmentary and do no more than suggest

¹ R. Gundlach (ed.), *Selbstverständnis und Realität: Akten des Symposiums zur ägyptischen Königsideologie in Mainz, 15.–17.6.1995* (ÄAT 36.1, Beiträge zur altägyptischen Königsideologie 1; Wiesbaden, 1997); idem (ed.), *Das frühe ägyptische Königtum: Akten des 2. Symposiums zur ägyptischen Königsideologie in Wien, 24.–26.9.1997* (ÄAT 36.2, Beiträge zur altägyptischen Königsideologie 2; Wiesbaden, 1999); R. Gundlach and U. Rössler-Köhler (eds), *Das Königtum der Ramessidenzeit: Voraussetzungen — Verwirklichung — Vermächtnis. Akten des 3. Symposiums zur Ägyptischen Königsideologie in Bonn 7.–9.6.2001* (ÄAT 36.3, Beiträge zur altägyptischen Königsideologie 3; Wiesbaden, 2003); R. Gundlach and J.H. Taylor (eds), *Egyptian Royal Residences: 4th Symposium on Egyptian Royal Ideology, London, June, 1st–5th 2004* (Königtum, Staat und Gesellschaft früher Hochkulturen 4.1; Wiesbaden, 2009). Cf. R. Gundlach and A. Klug (eds), *Das ägyptische Königtum im Spannungsfeld zwischen Innen- und Aussenpolitik im 2. Jahrtausend v. Chr.* (Königtum, Staat und Gesellschaft früher Hochkulturen 1; Wiesbaden, 2004); idem, *Der ägyptische Hof des Neuen Reiches: Seine Gesellschaft und Kultur im Spannungsfeld zwischen Innen- und Außenpolitik* (Königtum, Staat und Gesellschaft früher Hochkulturen 2; Wiesbaden, 2006).

patterns of movement, but they are explicit in their concern and, as more narrowly functional documents, they are less (or at least differently) ideologically charged than, for example, royal inscriptions.

The royal palaces of Egypt provide the obvious starting point for investigating the physical framework of the court, and their archaeology affords historians a glimpse of the environment in which much of the every-day life of the royal family took place.² It is often assumed that for most of the time the king, his family and his retinue of courtiers would have stayed in the palace, but surprisingly little is known about how frequently, and on what occasions, this existence would have been disrupted.³ As a point of departure, it is worth noting that it is an almost universal feature of monarchies, both in ancient and modern times, that the king travels around his territory to exercise and maintain royal power. Such processions — for they are more often than not highly ceremonial occasions where ritual plays a central role — are complex events rooted in power structures and political ideologies, and are generally characterised by formally staged scenes where the king interacts in various ways with his subjects, where he functions as the focal points for rites and performances, conducts appropriate cultic acts, or participates in staged and symbolically charged leisure activities like hunting. The cross-cultural relevance of such traditions has been stressed by many, and as Clifford Geertz emphasised in the context of a comparative study of the royal progress in Elizabethan England, fourteenth-century Java and nineteenth-century Morocco, the forms and trappings of these events may differ, but their purpose, to display ‘the inherent sacredness of central authority’, do not.⁴ In fact, the vast majority of pre-modern European monarchies display similar patterns of travel for the king and his court, a practice that gave rise to Hans Conrad Peyer’s concept of the ‘Reisekönigtum’ in Medieval Europe (Denmark, England, France, Germany, Holland, Italy, Sweden, etc).⁵ What comparative studies of the movements of kings and courts make clear — and this is by no means a euro-centric tradition, as Geertz emphasised⁶ — is that travelling is a key component in the exercise

² The standard introduction is P. Lacovara, *The New Kingdom Royal City* (London, 1997); cf. K. Spence, ‘Court and palace in ancient Egypt: The Amarna Period and later Eighteenth Dynasty’, in A.J. Spawforth (ed.), *The Court and Court Society in Ancient Monarchies* (Cambridge, 2007), 267–327, for more recent references.

³ Monumental inscriptions and reliefs mention or depict the king outside this sphere predominantly in three contexts: as a conquering warrior-king, as a priest officiating in temples, and as a king at leisure, pursuing appropriate activities like ‘fishing and fowling’ in the marshes of the Fayum. In all such cases the relationship between ideology and historical events is blurred, and reconstructing narrative histories based on such sources is problematic.

⁴ C. Geertz, ‘Centers, Kings and Charisma: Reflections on the Symbolics of Power’, in J. Ben-David and T.N. Clark (eds), *Culture and Its Creators* (Chicago and London, 1977), 171.

⁵ H.C. Peyer, ‘Das Reisekönigtum des Mittelalters’, in L. Schmugge, R. Sablonier and K. Wanner (eds), *Könige, Stadt und Kapital* (Zurich, 1982), 98–115.

⁶ Cf. n. 4 above. There is also limited evidence for a similar state of affairs in Assyria (c. 1200 BC), with provincial governors being asked to prepare for the arrival of the king and

of royal power, and the question is whether ancient Egypt was an exception to this. At issue here, then, is the degree to which the king can be said to be tied both physically and ideologically to a specific geographical location, and to what extent he is mobile. The possibilities range from an existence centred on a single palace or city to a semi-permanent state of travel: as Robert Knecht recently remarked of the French Renaissance court, '(it) was wherever the king happened to be', and in certain periods he 'travelled almost incessantly'.⁷ My impression is that neither of these two extremes describes the situation in Egypt with any accuracy. The evidence is fragmentary, and although it may be speculative to try to synthesise what survives into a generalised theory on royal progresses, there is perhaps enough for a tentative analysis.⁸

The level of mobility has consequences for any attempt to define where the court of ancient Egypt was at any particular time: the presence of a royal palace, and a necropolis for high officials, may not be sufficient to establish where the 'Residence' (*hnmw*) was,⁹ and there is considerable controversy regarding the concepts 'capital' and 'Residence' in New Kingdom Egypt.¹⁰ Indeed, as Stephen Quirke has noted, the lexicographic evidence for a 'Residence' in the early New Kingdom — in the sense of 'an institution that is singular, in being one place at any one time' — is 'remarkably elusive', prompting him to speculate that 'Possibly we should imagine the Eighteenth Dynasty as a kingship focussed on "control by circuit", with multiple centres of rule'.¹¹ I would argue that this situation (albeit not in the lexicographic sense) is not an Eighteenth Dynasty phenomenon, but rather one which characterises the New Kingdom as a whole, including the Ramesside period. Thebes, Memphis and Piramesse remain the primary urban centres from a political, administrative and religious perspective, but the situation is complex and a word like 'capital',

his court. There appears to have been no attempt to synthesise the material, but see e.g. E.C. Cancik-Kirschbaum, *Die Mittelasyrischen Briefe aus Tall Šēḫ Hamad* (Berichte der Ausgrabung Tall Šēḫ Hamad / Dūr-Katlimmu 4.1; Berlin, 1996), 147–53. I am grateful to Mogens Trolle-Larsen for this reference, and for a fruitful discussion on the subject.

⁷ R.J. Knecht, *The French Renaissance Court* (New Haven, 2008), 40–1.

⁸ Cf. the remarks by D. Raue, *Heliopolis und das Haus des Re* (ADAIK 16; Berlin, 1999), 122–3.

⁹ Compare the list of criteria drawn up by R. Gundlach, 'Hof — Hofgesellschaft — Hofkultur im pharaonischen Ägypten', in Gundlach and Klug (eds), *Der ägyptische Hof des Neuen Reiches*, 21–3.

¹⁰ On the concept of a 'capital' in New Kingdom Egypt, in relation to Memphis and Thebes, see M.J. Raven, 'Aspects of the Memphite Residence as illustrated by the Saqqara New Kingdom necropolis', in Gundlach and Taylor (eds), *Egyptian Royal Residences*, 153–64; G.T. Martin, 'Memphis: the status of a residence city in the Eighteenth Dynasty', in M. Bárta and J. Krejci (eds), *Abusir and Saqqara in the Year 2000* (Archiv Orientalni Supplementa 9; Prague, 2000), 99–120; D. Franke, 'Theben und Memphis — Metropolen im Alten Ägypten', in M. Jansen (ed.), *Entstehung und Entwicklung von Metropolen: 4. Symposium 20.-23.06.1996 Bonn* (Veröffentlichungen der Interdisziplinären Arbeitsgruppe Stadtkulturforschung 4; Aachen, 2002), 7–20.

¹¹ Stephen Quirke, 'The Residence in Relations between Places of Knowledge, Production and Power', in Gundlach and Taylor (eds), *Egyptian Royal Residences*, 112, 114.

without further definition, may not be meaningful. That is not to say that one should imagine the entire state administration as a mobile social structure, but rather that the king and a circle of ‘courtiers’, however one chooses to define them in terms of title and rank (and they are unlikely to be a fixed group),¹² need not have been tied to a single geographical location: as Maarten J. Raven observed, ‘Even if we want to imagine that at least the top officials followed the king around on his travels, it is hard to believe that they brought along the full staff of the various ministries’.¹³ Kings are attested as having more than one palace at their disposal, and the main urban centres may have had several palaces active at any given point in time, but the fragmentary nature of the archaeological and textual evidence means that the true extent of palace numbers, their geographical distribution and their functions remain unknown.¹⁴ However, royal palaces were only one category of accommodation available to an Egyptian king. Other more modest structures would have included hunting lodges and semi-permanent rest houses that could receive the king and his followers on various excursions, exemplified, *inter alia*, by the famous hunting-trips of Amenhotep III and Thutmose III during which scores of lions, wild bulls, elephants and rhinoceros were reputedly killed.¹⁵

¹² The question of who would have constituted the Egyptian court during the New Kingdom is difficult, but does not impact directly on my argument about the mobility of the king and his court (in the narrow sense of those who surround him on a daily basis, rather than more fixed administrative structures associated with palaces and temples). As Christine Raedler has noted (‘Rank and Favour at the Early Ramesside Court’, in Gundlach and Taylor (eds), *Egyptian Royal Residences*, 131–41), there has been a tendency to avoid definitions of what the ‘court’ and ‘court society’ (‘Hof’, ‘Hofgesellschaft’) might have been, and which officials this group would have included. Her illuminating attempt to identify the titles that might correspond to this circle in the New Kingdom (cf. ‘Zur Struktur der Hofgesellschaft Ramses’ II.’, in Gundlach and Klug (eds), *Der ägyptischen Hof des Neuen Reiches*, 39–87) notwithstanding, it is in the nature of the material basis for such lexicographic studies that they provide only limited information about the social structure and day-to-day composition of the ‘court’.

¹³ Raven, in Gundlach and Taylor (eds), *Egyptian Royal Residences*, 154. Compare the distinction between an *institutionell-administrative* and a *politisch-soziale* court element by Gundlach, in Gundlach and Klug (eds), *Der ägyptische Hof des Neuen Reiches*, 33.

¹⁴ M. Bietak, ‘Neue Paläste aus der 18. Dynastie’, in P. Janosi (ed.), *Structure and Significance: Thoughts on Ancient Egyptian Architecture* (Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Denkschriften der Gesamtkademie 33; Vienna, 2005), 131–2; K. Spence, ‘The Palaces of el-Amarna: Towards an architectural analysis’, in Gundlach and Taylor (eds), *Egyptian Royal Residences*, 167, with n. 4; W. Helck, *Materialien zur Wirtschaftsgeschichte des Neuen Reiches* (Wiesbaden, 1961), 201–7. The distinction between residential, administrative and ritual palaces often posited by modern scholars (e.g. Gundlach, in Gundlach and Klug (eds), *Der ägyptische Hof des Neuen Reiches*, 8–11) finds little support in the ancient evidence, and seems to me to be an expression of a modern unease when faced with multifarious categories of forms and functions, where the relevant classifications are imposed rather than discovered.

¹⁵ *Urk.* IV, 1244: 14–18; 1737: 8–1741: 15; cf. J. Baines, ‘On the Genre and Purpose of the “Large Commemorative Scarabs” of Amenhotep III’, in N. Grimal, A. Kamel and C.M. Sheikholeslami (eds), *Hommages à Fayza Haikal* (Cairo, 2003), 29–43, with references.

Lexicographically such institutions might correspond to the riverside ‘mooring-places’ (*mnîw*) of pharaoh mentioned in some New Kingdom texts,¹⁶ and perhaps the ‘villas’ or ‘castles’ (*bhn*) which are associated with both kings and wealthy individuals.¹⁷ Archaeological examples are not easy to identify, partly because such mud-brick buildings, like palaces, are unlikely to survive, and partly because of a general excavation bias towards tombs and temples.¹⁸ Barry Kemp has drawn attention to one possible example from Giza, apparently in use during most of the New Kingdom (it includes a door jamb of Tutankhamun ‘usurped’ by Ramesses II), which he interpreted as a hunting-lodge;¹⁹ another possible example is the recently discovered Ramesside residence at Tell Abyad in the eastern Delta.²⁰ Buildings where the king dwelled temporarily would have varied in form and function, from the royal apartments in the New Kingdom “mortuary” temples of Western Thebes, built in stone and presumably primarily used in connection with religious festivals requiring the king’s attendance,²¹ to more ephemeral constructions like tents in which a king would stay during the inspection of building sites or, perhaps, during chariot-racing or hunting.²² Most of the travelling of the Egyptian pharaoh and his court would have been by boat on the Nile, an activity which by its nature has left little archaeological trace, but there is some iconographic evidence showing the

¹⁶ Gardiner, *Wilbour Papyrus*, II, 18. For the function see Helck, *Materialien*, 235 (‘Felder der Häfen’); cf. J.M. Kruchten, *Le Décret d’Horemheb* (Université libre de Bruxelles, Travaux de faculté philosophie et lettres 82; Brussels, 1981), 111–12.

¹⁷ It is not always clear what nuance of meaning *bhn* (*Wb.* I, 471.6–8) has when associated with a king. The standard discussion of the word remains K. Sethe, ‘Die Bau- und Denkmalsteine der alten Ägypten und ihre Namen’, (SPAW phil.-hist. Kl.; Berlin, 1933), 864–912; cf. E. Fowles Morris, *The Architecture of Imperialism: Military bases and the evolution of foreign policy in Egypt’s New Kingdom* (PÄ 22; Leiden, 2005), 399–400 (esp. p. 400 n. 157 for ‘villas’ of kings); P. Grandet, ‘Deux Etablissements de Ramses III en Nubie et en Palestine’, *JEA* 69 (1983), 112–13; A.H. Gardiner, *Ancient Egyptian Onomastica* (Oxford, 1947), II, 204*–205*; R.A. Caminos, *Late-Egyptian Miscellanies*, (BES 1; London, 1954), 38, 140–1.

¹⁸ See, for example, the observations by L. Giddy, ‘The present state of Egyptian archaeology: 1997 update’, in A. Leahy (ed.), *Studies on Ancient Egypt in Honour of H. S. Smith* (EES Occasional Publications 13; London, 1999), 109–13.

¹⁹ B.J. Kemp, *Ancient Egypt: Anatomy of a Civilization* (2nd edition, London, 2006), 282.

²⁰ D. Valbelle and F. Leclère, ‘Tell Abyad: A royal Ramesside residence’, *Egyptian Archaeology* 32 (2008), 29–32.

²¹ Overview by R. Stadelmann, ‘Tempelpalast und Erscheinungsfenster in den thebanischen Totentempeln’, *MDAIK* 29 (1973), 221–42, although his conclusion that these palaces were ‘dummy’-buildings seems forced to me; cf. D. O’Connor, ‘Beloved of Maat, The Horizon of Re: The Royal Palace in New Kingdom Egypt’, in D. O’Connor and D.P. Silverman (eds), *Ancient Egyptian Kingship* (PÄ 19; Leiden, 1995), 281.

²² See B.J. Kemp, ‘A Building of Amenophis III at Kom el-’Abd’, *JEA* 63 (1977), 77–8, who noted the frequent use of tents by kings on military expeditions, in addition to one example of an Egyptian king staying in a tent within Egypt (Akhenaten on an early visit to Akhetaten). He suggested another possible tent-site at a leisure arena (?) of Amenhotep III, some 3.5 km south of his temple at Malqata.

royal barge on the water,²³ and texts mention a ‘royal barge’ (*wi3 nsw*) as the primary means of travel for the king, both in connection with hunting trips, ‘leisure-cruising’, and for the transport of the body of a dead king for burial,²⁴ and provisions for it is occasionally recorded in administrative documents.²⁵ The historical record of one such journey is preserved in the autobiography of Nebwenenef, High Priest of Amun under Ramesses II, where he relates his appointment by the king, an event which took place when pharaoh made a ‘landing’ (*rdi r t3*) at Tawer (Thinis) with the royal barge. In that text the king is explicitly said to have travelled northwards to Tawer after having attended ‘the beautiful festival of Opet’ at Thebes, illustrating the tradition of kings attending major religious festivals in person.²⁶ Such references are rare and primarily incidental in the contexts in which they appear: there are few texts explicitly addressing the issue of royal mobility and travel.

Travelling kings

The evidence for the travelling aspect of Egyptian kingship is thus limited, but it is suggestive.²⁷ For example, travelling is explicitly thematised in the court rhetoric of hierarchy: one of the most common Egyptian designations for a person of high social rank is *šmsw hr* or *šmsw nsw*, literally ‘one who follows the king’, and descriptions of officials having ‘followed the king in all his travels’ (*šmsw nsw r nmtt=f*) are an established *topos* in elite autobiographies.²⁸ When such *topoi* deviate from the standard phraseology, they tend to impart additional information, such as the governor of the Fayum, Sobekhotep, who

²³ The royal barge of Akhenaten is shown in a tomb painting from Amarna; N. de G. Davies, *The rock-tombs of Amarna V* (ASEg 17; London, 1907), pl. V; cf. E. Roik, *Das altägyptische Wohnhaus und seine Darstellung im Flachbild* (Frankfurt, 1988), I, 73–4; II, fig. 115.

²⁴ For the hunting trip and the ‘leisure cruise’ (on an artificial lake), see the commemorative scarabs of Amenhotep III; A. de Buck, *Egyptian Readingbook* (Leiden, 1963), 66.2 and 67.10. For the funerary use, see P. Harris I (76.1) which mentions a ‘royal river barge’ (*wi3-nswt tpy-itrw*) used to transport the body of Setnakht to his burial; P. Grandet, *Le Papyrus Harris I (BM 9999)* (BdE 109; Cairo, 1994), II, 236, pl. 77 line 1. On royal ships in general, see E. Martin-Pardey, ‘Schiffe’, *LÄ V*, 601–10, esp. p. 606.

²⁵ The verso of P. Turin 1999+2009 mentions the delivery of three large pieces of rope (each c. 1200 cubits long) ‘for the royal barges’ (*n n3 wi3w nsw*; KRI VI, 560: 9–11), but the institutional context of the document is not known (it also includes quantities of wood for ships). The verso has the famous ‘Journal of the Necropolis’ from year 13 of Ramesses IX, but the recto accounts seem unrelated to the administration of the royal necropolis (but cf. Helck, *Materialien zur Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, 816, 893–4).

²⁶ KRI III, 283: 2–5; cf. E. Frood, *Biographical Texts from Ramessid Egypt* (Writings from the Ancient World 26; Atlanta, 2007), 35–9 (no. 1).

²⁷ I know of no specific studies, but see the passing comments by D. Lorton, ‘What was the *pr-nsw* and who managed it?’, *SAK* 18 (1991), 303–4; cf. B.J. Kemp, *Ancient Egypt*, 281–2.

²⁸ H. Guksch, *Königsdienst: Zur Selbstdarstellung der Beamten in der 18. Dynastie*, (SAGA 11; Heidelberg, 1994), 58–73, 191, 193; C. Raedler, ‘Zur Struktur der Hofgesellschaft Ramses’ II.’, in Gundlach and Klug (eds), *Der ägyptische Hof des Neuen Reiches*, 52.

claims that he ‘followed the Lord of the Two Lands among the islands of the Fayum oasis’,²⁹ presumably during official visits to fish and hunt in the fertile marshes there. Such statements, governed by the decorum of mortuary inscriptions, mask the complex socio-economic processes at work. The governor of the Fayum would have been responsible not only for following the king around on his hunting trips, but also for receiving the king in an appropriate manner during his visit, a duty which included the regular upkeep of the local palace where the king would stay: the Gurob palace accounts, for example, show grain dues received from the ‘governor of the southern Fayum, Amenemope’.³⁰ Failure to supply necessary or promised resources would impact negatively on one’s standing: in one Ramesside letter the writer appears to express his fear of becoming a *persona non grata* at court if he cannot make good on his promise to get hold of galena.³¹

The scale of the economic transactions that would precede the arrival of the king and his court would depend on the size of his retinue, but could be considerable.³² A Ramesside model letter, found in three different manuscripts, contains instructions for preparing for royal visits at some unspecified ‘mooring-places’ (*mnîw*), perhaps to be identified with the ‘mooring-places of pharaoh’ mentioned above.³³ The letter starts off by listing the food required, including some eight different varieties of bread (to a grand total of 9 200 loaves), over 20 000 cakes and biscuits, and large amounts of dried meat, milk and cream, fruits and vegetables, honey and oil, as well as beef, chicken and fish. The author then details the serving staff to be present, including young men to serve as ‘cupbearers’ (*wdpw*),³⁴ washed and dressed up in their finest,

²⁹ *Urk.* IV, 1587: 16, cf. 1587: 7 (*iry rd.wy n nb t3.wy m îww hry-ib nw t3 š*).

³⁰ A.H. Gardiner, *Ramesside Administrative Documents* (Oxford, 1948), 30: 11; compare 26: 18 for deliveries of fish from another local governor. Resources under the authority of the governor of Memphis are also used to provide for Seti I during a visit to that city: *KRI* I, 244: 11–16.

³¹ *KRI* VI, 517: 11: ‘Do not make me become ill-reputed (*h3îw*) at the Residence’ (cf. E.F. Wente, *Letters from Ancient Egypt* (Atlanta, 1990), 38 no. 37).

³² This provided opportunity for economic exploitation by the officials responsible for this preparation, an abuse of power that must have been widespread: it received royal attention in the *Decree of Horemheb* where the very first paragraph deals with the misappropriation of goods in connection with royal travelling (*Urk.* IV, 2143: 15–2144: 17). Compare, too, the fifth paragraph where the king acts to relieve some of the pressure exerted by royal scribes to make local governors provide ‘for the northward-and-southward journey’ of the king (*Urk.* IV, 2149: 14–2151: 12).

³³ See n. 16 above. For the letter, see Caminos, *Late-Egyptian Miscellanies*, 198–219; A.H. Gardiner, *Late-Egyptian Miscellanies* (BiAeg 7; Brussels, 1937), 49: 14–54: 11. Such a visit is mentioned in passing in a letter from the governor of Thebes Sennefer (Eighteenth Dynasty): ‘I shall come to you after One (i.e. the king) has moored at the town of Hu-Sekhem in three days’ time’ (Wente, *Letters*, 92–3, no. 188).

³⁴ The translation of *wdpw* is problematic, and the conventional terms most often used in Egyptology do not capture the range of responsibility associated with the office, although ‘cupbearer’ arguably suits the present context well. For an overview of the available material, see.

and foreign slaves from Syria-Palestine and Nubia as fan-carriers to shield the king from the sun. The king's chariots, his personal armour and weapons are to be oiled and polished, but the occasion appears to be a formalised and ritualistic display of kingship and power, rather than a military event: the letter repeatedly mentions a 'window' (*sšd*) in whose vicinity bowls and dishes of silver and gold are to be placed, and a procession of chariots, fine horses and livestock whose 'masters' bow down before the king. The description recalls the 'window-of-appearance' (*sšd-n-h*),³⁵ the Egyptian setting *par excellence* for the public display of royal power and favour, and may suggest that such displays were not restricted to the central palaces and temples, and that royal visits to more provincial areas (the 'mooring-places' of the letter) could also incorporate these events. Such temporary occasions could perhaps be served by a 'mobile' window of appearance — a possible example of this is depicted on a royal barge in the tomb of May at Amarna, where it overlooks the deck of the boat.³⁶ Despite the didactic context of the model letter quoted above, the description is realistic, and the level of consumption and generally luxurious life-style envisaged is more than plausible — the figures for bread are directly comparable to those found in the actual accounts of the provisions for a visit of Seti I at Memphis.³⁷ As one court official of the Eighteenth Dynasty expressed it, 'How happy is he who follows the ruler: he is feasting every day'.³⁸

There are, in effect, only two categories of texts which might supply sufficient data to reconstruct the movements of an Egyptian king over time: royal annals and administrative documents of the royal court.³⁹ The former survives more frequently than the latter, primarily because they were occasionally transmitted in monumental form, but the principles and priorities of selection for inclusion in such contexts are often unclear. In practice very few examples of inscriptions of annals contain information about the domestic travels of

M. Gregersen, 'Butler, cupbearer, l'échanson or Truchsess', in J.C. Goyon and C. Cardin (eds), *Proceedings of the Ninth International Congress of Egyptologists* (OLA 150; Leuven, 2007), 839–50.

³⁵ P. Vomberg, *Das Erscheinungsfenster innerhalb der amarnazeitlichen Palastarchitektur* (Philippika 4; Wiesbaden, 2004); A. Gnirs, 'In the King's House: Audiences and receptions at court', in Gundlach and Taylor (eds), *Egyptian Royal Residences*, 25–40; Raedler, in Gundlach and Klug (eds), *Der ägyptische Hof des Neuen Reiches*, 60–1; Spence, in Gundlach and Taylor (eds), *Egyptian Royal Residences*, 180–5.

³⁶ Davies, *The rock-tombs of Amarna* V, pl. V; cf. Vomberg, *Das Erscheinungsfenster*, 148–51 (with figs. 71–72), who notes parallels on *talatat*-blocks from Hermopolis.

³⁷ Kitchen, *RITA, Notes and Comments* I, 174.

³⁸ Iahmes, owner of Amarna tomb 3 (4): N. de G. Davies, *The rock-tombs of Amarna* III (ASEg 15; London, 1905), pl. 28, cols. 10–11.

³⁹ Relevant information is also found in royal decrees which frequently include the location from which the decree was issued, but these monuments are few and irregular and therefore cannot provide the necessary chronological range. For examples of such decrees, see notes 77 and 81 below.

kings, instead focusing on military exploits and temple donations. The famous New Kingdom annals of Thutmose III or Amenhotep II are a case in point: while they present fairly detailed accounts of military campaigns into the Levant, and the associated spoils of war, they cover long periods of time in a very cursory fashion while excluding virtually all royal activity related to other spheres of kingship. As John Baines has noted of the annals of Thutmose III, ‘they do not represent the events of the king’s reign... [and] all annals should be seen as excerpts from larger bodies of records’.⁴⁰ Royal annals, then, may have the required long-term perspective, but do not, as a rule, allow one to reconstruct an overview of royal activities during the period covered. One partial exception to this is the Middle Kingdom inscription known as *The Annals of Amenemhat II*, a set of short entries listing the main cultic, military and political acts of that king over two unspecified years of his reign, incised on a pink granite block and probably originally installed in the temple of Ptah at Memphis.⁴¹ That inscription, despite the short period of time covered, makes it clear that the king travelled frequently: there are many references to ‘following’ (*šmsw*) cult statues to various destinations, and to the inspection of building sites or the installation of important architectural elements. The sites which the king visited during the two years in question range from Armant, Thebes and Tod in the south, via the 19th Upper Egyptian nome and the western Delta (Wadi Natrun), to the Ways of Horus in the eastern Delta; a significant part of Egypt. Towards the end of the first year preserved on the stone it records ‘the resting of the king in the palace Lake-of-Senwosret in the southern Fayum’ (*hṯp nsw m ḥ n t3 š-rsy š-n-nsw-bity-hpr-k3-r*; col. 23), during which the king is said to have woven a large net which — in line with the standard rhetoric of royal ideology — he then used to catch an unprecedented amount of fowl: ‘never had the like occurred’.⁴² Treatments of the monument plausibly suggest that the events are presented in chronological order, suggesting that king spent the end of the Egyptian year “on holiday” in the Fayum, engaged in the traditional pursuits of hunting and fishing.⁴³

There are no comparable monuments from the New Kingdom in terms of the level of detail and range of activities covered, but presumably kings of this period were not less active than their predecessors in this regard, and there is some supporting evidence from inscriptions. For example, in a broken context in the *Decree of Horemheb* that king’s predecessor, Thutmose III, is described

⁴⁰ J. Baines, ‘On the evolution, purpose, and forms of Egyptian annals’, in E.M. Engel, V. Müller and U. Hartung (eds), *Zeichen aus dem Sand: Streiflichter aus Ägyptens Geschichte zu Ehren von Günter Dreyer* (MENES 5; Wiesbaden, 2008), 29, 32.

⁴¹ H. Altenmüller and A.M. Moussa, ‘Die Inschrift Amenemhets II. aus Memphis’, *SAK* 18 (1991), 1–48; cf. S. Quirke and J. Malek, ‘Memphis 1991: Epigraphy’, *JEA* 78 (1992), 13–18.

⁴² Altenmüller and Moussa, *SAK* 18, 28–37.

⁴³ Altenmüller and Moussa, *SAK* 18, 26–7.

as ‘going on an up-stream-down-stream journey every year’, presumably in connection with the Opet-festival,⁴⁴ while Horemheb himself explains how he travelled around the country all the way to the south.⁴⁵ Similarly, several Nineteenth Dynasty kings visited quarrying sites for stone and gold in person: Seti I visited the gold mines east of Edfu,⁴⁶ Ramesses II claims to have chosen a stone block for one of his colossal statues while on an ‘excursion’ (*swtwt*) to a quarry at Manshiyt es-Sadr, near Heliopolis,⁴⁷ and Ramesses IV came to the Wadi Hammamat where he inspected a quarrying site.⁴⁸

Administrative documents of the royal court survive only in exceptional cases, and when they do their fragmentary nature makes them the polar opposite of royal annals in terms of information: the level of detail may be sufficient to reconstruct a general overview of royal activities, but the period of time covered is often very limited. The famous set of accounts on P. Boulaq 18, for example, contains details of the activities of the royal court of the Thirteenth Dynasty during a two-week visit at Thebes, but there is little information about the movements of the king, perhaps primarily because of the short period of time covered.⁴⁹ For an investigation of the movements of the king the combination of these two categories of texts (royal annals and accounts) is essential, but their potentially complementary role is severely limited by the uneven survival of the evidence. I review here those New Kingdom documents of the latter category known to me, and discuss their potential for an analysis of the domestic movements of the king and his court.

The location of the king in administrative documents

In 1896, when Wilhelm Spiegelberg published a set of papyri containing the accounts from a visit to Memphis by Seti I (including bread production), he noted a peculiar habit of the Egyptian scribes who were associated with the administration of royal resources.⁵⁰ When dating entries in their journals,

⁴⁴ *ir dr wnw Mn-hpr-r' hr šmt hr hd-[hnt] tnw rnpt* ; Kruchten, *Le Décret d'Horemheb*, 96. The sentence occurs in a passage concerned with the misappropriation of goods in connection with a royal visit: the paragraph explicitly mentions a ‘mooring-place’ (*mnîw*; cf. note 33 above).

⁴⁵ *Urk.* IV, 2155: 9–10.

⁴⁶ *KRI* I, 65: 4–70: 4.

⁴⁷ *KRI* II, 361: 2–5.

⁴⁸ *KRI* IV, 12: 15–14: 15.

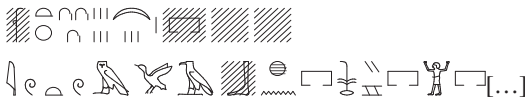
⁴⁹ S. Quirke, *The Administration of Egypt in the Late Middle Kingdom* (New Malden, 1991), 17–35, and note the inclusion of part of a journal possibly recording a royal progress at the end of the recto (§§50; *ibid.*, 20, 31 n. 30), although A. Spalinger, *Some Aspects of the Military Documents of the Ancient Egyptians* (Princeton, 1984), 77, 122, interprets this as a reference to a military expedition; cf. Baines, in Engel et al. (eds), *Zeichen aus dem Sand*, 30. On the difficult topic of the presence of the king in the papyrus, see S. Quirke, ‘Visible and Invisible: The King in the administrative papyri of the late Middle Kingdom’, in R. Gundlach and W. Seipel (eds), *Das frühe ägyptische Königtum*, *ÄAT* 36.2 (Wiesbaden, 1999), 68–70.

⁵⁰ W. Spiegelberg, *Rechnungen aus der Zeit Setis I.* (Strasbourg, 1896), 35 n. 4.

they used the standard dating formula ‘Regnal year X, month Y, day Z’, but added the information that ‘The king is in (such-and-such a place)’.⁵¹ I present these examples below, along with others that have since come to light, in chronological order: they are necessarily few because papyri from the royal administration are extremely rare in the archaeological record.

The earliest examples come not from Egyptian administrative documents *stricto sensu* but from the Amarna tablets. Several of these contain hieratic docketts related to the handling and storage of the letters by the scribes of the ‘Office of documents of pharaoh’,⁵² and two in particular reveal that the practice of adding information about the present whereabouts of the king dates back to at least the time of Amenhotep III:

(1) EA 23



‘Year 36, fourth month of Per[et...].
One was in the southern estate House-of-Rejoicing [...]’⁵³

(2) EA 27



‘Year 2, first month of winter, day [...].
One was in the southern city, in the estate of Rejoicing-in-Akhet.
Copy of the Naharin letter that the messenger Pirtja and the messenger [...] brought’⁵⁴

⁵¹ Following standard practice, the figure of the king is referred to by the impersonal pronoun *.tw*, occasionally with a divine determinative. On the expression *iw.tw m* (...), ‘One is in (such-and-such a place)’, cf. the brief remarks by E.F. Wente, *JNES* 28 (1969), 277.

⁵² On these hieratic docketts, see P. Abrahams and L. Colon, ‘De l’usage et de l’archivage des tablettes cunéiformes de’Amarna’, in L. Pantalacci (ed.), *La lettre d’archive: Communication administrative et personnelle dans l’antiquité proche-orientale et égyptienne*, Bibliothèque générale 32 (Cairo, 2008), 13–17, with references.

⁵³ Transcription by J. Černý, as reported by C. Kühne, *Die Chronologie des internationalen Korrespondenz von Amarna* (AOAT 17; Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1973), 37 n. 178. Parts of the text are illegible today, but they include the word *mitt*, ‘copy’ in line two, and the location of the ‘House of Rejoicing’ is certainly not the same as that given on EA 23, judging by the traces, as Černý too noted (contra C. Bezold and E.A.W. Budge, *The Tell el-Amarna Tablets in the British Museum* (London, 1892), xlii–xliii).

⁵⁴ The transcription is based on the hieratic facsimile in H. Winckler, *Der Thontafelfund von el Amarna I* (Mittheilungen aus den orientalischen Sammlungen I; Berlin, 1889), pl. 19 (no. 23); and differs from that in *Urk.* IV, 1995: 16–20 on one or two minor points.

The first of these (EA 23) is dated to year 36 of an unnamed king, which can hardly be anyone but Amenhotep III.⁵⁵ Although found at Amarna, it must have been received by Egyptian scribes prior to the building of that city in year 5 of Akhenaten's reign, but we cannot know where the tablet was originally received. The location of the king is similarly difficult to pin down: the southern 'estate' or 'castle' (*bḥn*)⁵⁶ could conceivably refer to Thebes, as the second docket does (there indicated by the term *nīwt rsy*, 'the southern city'), and certainly the name 'House of Rejoicing' (*pr-ḥꜥ*) was applied to the palace of Amenhotep III at Malqata,⁵⁷ which would suit the context. The hieratic docket on the second tablet (EA 27) is dated to year 2 of Akhenaten,⁵⁸ when he is explicitly said to be in Thebes ('the southern city'), in a *bḥn* called 'Rejoicing-in-the-Horizon', a structure which seems otherwise unknown.⁵⁹ As a king he has traditionally not been seen as particularly active in terms of military exploits and travelling, but he certainly left Amarna occasionally, and there is no reason to suppose that he travelled less in Egypt than his predecessors. For all the rhetoric about his special fondness for Amarna in the boundary stelae, he clearly envisaged himself and his family (and presumably part of his court) travelling throughout the country: 'If I die in any town (*dmī*) of the north, the south, the west or the east, in these millions of years, let me brought back to be buried in Akhetaten'.⁶⁰ In fact, significant parts of the text on the stelae concern arrangements for the cult of Aten to be maintained while he was away 'in any other city (*nīwt*) or in any other town (*dmī*)', '(in) any place which I may wish to travel (*šmt*) to'.⁶¹

⁵⁵ Kühne, *Chronologie*, 37; J. Černý, 'Three Regnal Dates of the Eighteenth Dynasty', *JEA* 50 (1964), 37–8.

⁵⁶ On the translation of *bḥn*, see Fowles Morris, *The Architecture of Imperialism*, 399–400, and cf. note 17 above.

⁵⁷ W.C. Hayes, 'Inscriptions from the Palace of Amenhotep III', *JNES* 10 (1951), 177–8. Structures called *pr-ḥꜥ* are frequently associated with Sed-festivals: J. Assmann, 'Palast oder Tempel? Überlegungen zur Architektur und Topographie von Amarna', *JNES* 31 (1972), 150–2.

⁵⁸ For the reading of the year number, which was previously a matter of some discussion (both 2 and 12 was thought possible), see now W. Fritz, 'Zum Datierungsvermerk auf der Amarnatafel Kn 27', *SAK* 18 (1991), 207–14, with references to previous literature. Cf. E. Hornung, R. Krauss and D. A. Warburton (eds), *Ancient Egyptian Chronology* (Handbook of Oriental Studies, Section 1, The Near and Middle East 83; Leiden, 2006), 206.

⁵⁹ Unless this is an abbreviation of the institution known as *ḥꜥ m 3ḥt n itn*, 'Rejoicing-in-the-Horizon-of-the-Aten', an early palace of Akhenaten in Thebes: M. Gabolde, *D'Akhenaton à Toutankhamon* (Collection d'Institut d'archéologie et d'histoire de l'Antiquité 3; Paris, 1998), 82–5.

⁶⁰ W.J. Murnane and C.C. van Siclen III, *The Boundary Stelae of Akhenaten* (London, 1993), 25, 41.

⁶¹ Murnane and Van Siclen, *Boundary Stelae*, 29, 43.

any case it is clearly an institution which was in use some two centuries after the death of its founder, Thutmose I. The institution is mentioned in other texts — it had a governor under Thutmose III, its vineyards supplied wine to Amarna under Akhenaten, and it was from here that Tutankhamun issued his famous Restoration stela⁷³ — but it has never been identified archaeologically. Little is known about the foundations of the Eighteenth Dynasty kings at Memphis, but as the necropolis is excavated and more material comes to light it seems that their monumental presence there may have been greater than has so far been assumed.⁷⁴ For the ‘House of Aakheperkare’ to have survived as an active institution for over two hundred years is not in itself surprising, because several estates of previous kings are known to have remained active for many generations; other papyri in this dossier mention the ‘Domain of the Aten’, also in Memphis (in connection with the transport of wood), which is generally interpreted as an Amarna-period foundation similarly active under Seti I.⁷⁵

DATE	LOCATION	DOCUMENT
Year 2, Shomu 4, day 23	Memphis, ‘House of Aakheperkare’	P. BN 206, I.1–3
Year 2, Akhet 1, day 2	Memphis, ‘House of Aakheperkare’	P. BN 204, III.1
(Year 2), Akhet 1, day 3	Memphis (unspecified)	P. BN 204, III.6
(Year 2), Akhet 1, day 4	Memphis (unspecified)	P. BN 204, III.10
(Year 2), Akhet 1, day 7	‘on an excursion in the eastern region’	P. BN 206, II.1
(Year 2), Akhet 3, day 7	‘on an excursion in the northern region’	P. BN 205, 16–18
Year 2, Peret 2, day 16	‘in Heliopolis-of-Re’	P. BN 209, verso IV.1
Year 3, Shomu 1, day 17	‘in Heliopolis-of-Re’	P. BN 211, 1

Fig. 1. A partial itinerary of Seti I during the second and third year of his reign, according to the accounts of the royal household.

The table above (fig. 1) provides only a fragment of the itinerary of Seti I,⁷⁶ during which much of his travelling took place in the Delta area, including Heliopolis and Memphis where he had a palace (*pr-hnt*).⁷⁷ The two ‘excursions’

⁷³ Helck, *Verwaltung*, 97; cf. Kitchen, *RITA, Notes and Comments* I, 162.

⁷⁴ Overview of the material, primarily from a funerary context, by Raven, in Gundlach and Taylor (eds), *Egyptian Royal Residence*, 153–64. Hopes of discovering archaeological remains of royal foundations are slim, as noted by D. Jeffreys, *The Survey of Memphis* I (EES Occasional Publications 3; London, 1985), 43. Lexicographic studies of toponyms provide one way of approaching the issue: cf. V. Angenot, ‘A Horizon of Aten in Memphis?’, *JSSEA* 35 (2008), 7–26, esp. pp. 13–16. I have been unable to consult the undoubtedly relevant work of S. Pasquali, *Recherches sur Memphis au Nouvel Empire: Topographie, toponymie, histoire* (PhD diss., Université Paul-Valéry, Montpellier, 2008).

⁷⁵ For examples from this dossier, see the ‘estate of Horemheb’ (*pr hr-m-hb*; *KRI* I, 281: 10), the ‘Domain of the Aten’ (*t3 hwt p3 itm*; *KRI* I, 279: 14; cf. B. Löhr, ‘Axanti in Memphis’, *SAK* 2 (1975), 146–7), and the ‘estate of Amenhotep II’ (*pr 3-hprw-r*; *KRI* I, 279: 3).

⁷⁶ Cf. Raue, *Heliopolis*, 122–3.

mentioned took place two months apart, but the dossier is not complete so it is not possible to extract information about how long these trips lasted. The term for going on an excursion is *swtw*, a word that can imply a formal mode of travelling and which was often used to describe kings going on hunting trips or visiting temples.⁷⁸ Although he reigned for little more than a decade, Seti I's building program was extensive, as were his military activities in the Levant.⁷⁹ He had a palace built at Qantir in the Delta, and may have founded the great Delta-residence of the Ramesside kings,⁸⁰ where he probably spent much of his time towards the end of his reign. In his early years he was frequently at Thebes (where he would also have attended some of the main religious festivals),⁸¹ but he would also have journeyed to different parts of the country. Records are, however (as always), few: in year 9 he visited the gold-mines east of Edfu in person, remarking on the desolate landscape and the lack of water, and on an undated stela from the Sphinx-temple at Giza there is a description of him hunting, accompanied by his courtiers who applaud his skills.⁸² Despite the paucity of archaeological material from some of his main sites of activity like Heliopolis and Memphis, it is clear that he was a king who initiated large-scale building programs over a vast geographical area, from Nubian gold-mining settlements to the turquoise mines of Sinai, and he left stelae from Syria-Palestine in the east to the desert oases in the west. Not all of these would have necessitated a personal visit by the king, but they serve as an indicator of royal attention and influence, which may — like the military expeditions — reflect the personal involvement of the king.⁸³

⁷⁷ Several monuments also mention him being '(in) the city of Memphis' (*dmi n hwt-k3-ptḥ*) in the early years of his reign, from where he issued decrees providing for the cults of Min-Amun (*KRI I*, 38: 5) and the lion-goddess Pakhet (*KRI I*, 42: 15–43: 2), as well as the famous Nauri decree (*KRI I*, 46: 5). For the existence of the palace, see the monuments of its overseer, Hormin: Helck, *Verwaltung*, 264; *KRI I*, 310: 1–319: 15.

⁷⁸ Relevant examples include a hunting trip of Thutmose IV at Giza (Dreamstela; *Urk.* IV, 1541: 12), an unnamed king in a model letter going to Heliopolis (Caminos, *Late-Egyptian Miscellanies*, 180, 458), Ramesses II's visit to the quarries at Manshiyt es-Sadr (*KRI II*, 361: 2), and a Karnak inscription describing a visit by Ramesses IV 'to view the *išd*-tree' at a temple of Ptah (*Wb.* IV, 77: 12).

⁷⁹ P.J. Brand, *The Monuments of Seti I: Epigraphic, Historical and Art Historical Analysis* (PÄ 16; Leiden, 2000), 350–65.

⁸⁰ Brand, *Monuments of Seti I*, 131–2, with n. 45.

⁸¹ Several inscriptions mention him being 'in the city of Thebes' (*m dmi n w3st*) or 'in the southern city' (*m nwt rsy*): upon his return from his first military campaign in year 1 (*KRI I*, 41: 5); in year 6 he sent an expedition out from here to bring back sandstone (*KRI I*, 60: 8); in year 8 (?) he received news of a Nubian rebellion while staying here (*KRI I*, 102: 13). For the Opet festival, cf. Kitchen, *RITA, Notes and Comments I*, 164; *KRI I*, 207: 7–8.

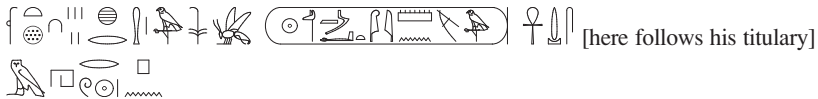
⁸² The gold production inscription(s) in Kanais temple: *KRI I*, 65: 14–67: 4. For the huntsman stela, see S. Hassan, *The Great Sphinx and its Secrets* (Excavations at Giza 8; Cairo, 1953), 104–5; cf. *KRI I*, 76: 14–77: 14 (text only).

⁸³ Some military campaigns probably involved the king in a physical sense, and his triumphant return in person is regularly described, albeit in distinctly formulaic style (e.g. *KRI I*, 10: 5–10; 15: 10; 18: 15; 19: 9; 41: 1; etc.).

Despite the data provided by these examples (summarised in fig. 2 above), it is not possible to reconstruct a more detailed overview of the movements of Seti II, primarily because his short reign of six years have left few monuments comparable to those of Seti I discussed above. One of the few journeys recorded for his reign was when he ‘moored’ (*mni*) at Thebes in year one (second month of Akhet, days 10-13), and crossed over to the West bank. The text is a short hieratic note on an ostracon from the Valley of the Kings, so presumably he was there in connection with (the start of?) the excavation of his tomb (KV 15).⁹⁰ A royal decree copied in his reign may or may not have been issued by him: this is part of the Late-Egyptian Miscellany of P. Anastasi IV (BM EA 10249), and concerns a royal reprimand in connection with ‘the king coming for an excursion to Heliopolis’ (*iw pr-ʿ3 ʿ.w.s. r swtwt r iwnw*).⁹¹ The verb used for the ‘excursion’ is *swtwt*, which is echoed in the Seti I accounts described above, a term frequently used for the movements of kings, gods and spirits in a processional sense.⁹² In the entries from the administrative accounts the king is initially in Memphis in a palace named after himself (the ‘house of Seti II’), but in subsequent entries he has moved on to Piramesse. The name given for that city here is ‘house of Ramesses Meryamun, the great ka of Re-Horakhty’, but as Gardiner showed, this is simply an alternative version of Piramesse (‘house of Ramesses Meryamun, Great of Victories’),⁹³ attested from the second half of the reign of Ramesses II.⁹⁴

A final set of examples (nos. 16–19) comes from an extraordinary papyrus dossier with details of a construction project at Saqqara, where a general May, who served under Ramesses III, was having his tomb built:⁹⁵

(16) P. Cairo JdE 52002, recto 1–3



⁹⁰ KRI I, 302: 2–8. For the find spot, see J. Černý, *Catalogue général des antiquités égyptiennes du Musée du Caire, Nos. 25501–25832, Ostraca hiératiques* (Cairo, 1935), I, 23.

⁹¹ Gardiner, *Late-Egyptian Miscellanies*, 46: 11–12; Caminos, *Late-Egyptian Miscellanies*, 182.

⁹² Cf. note 78 above.

⁹³ A.H. Gardiner, ‘The Delta Residence of the Ramessides’, *JEA* 5 (1918), 136–7.

⁹⁴ The chronology of the name is discussed by Raue, *Heliopolis*, 79, esp. n. 4.

⁹⁵ For the text of the dossier, see KRI VII, 263: 4–273: 7; for discussions see P. Posener-Kriéger, ‘Construire une tombe à l’ouest de Mn-nfr (P. Cairo 52002)’, *RdE* 33 (1981), 49–58; idem, ‘Au plaisir des paléographes. Papyrus Caire JE 52003’, in P. Der Manuelian and R. Freed (eds), *Studies in Honor of William Kelly Simpson* (Boston, 1996), II, 655–64; J. van Dijk, *The New Kingdom Necropolis of Memphis: Historical and Iconographical Studies* (Groningen, 1993), 24–5; R.J. Demarée, ‘Reports on Tomb-Construction at Saqqara in the New Kingdom’, *Saqqara Newsletter* 6 (2008), 7–10.

One was in the house of Usermaatre Meryamun, who brightens Iunu, the royal palace, l.p.h., in strength and victory forever, in an eternity of Sed-festivals [here follows the rest of the text]⁹⁹

The date and heading in the first papyrus, P. Cairo JdE 52002, is written in large uncial hieratic, and this is followed by the first entry where the script gradually decreases in size until it approaches regular administrative hieratic: 'Giving the document of all the assignments which are to be done in the work of the place of eternity of the royal scribe and overseer of the army, May, which is being constructed (to) the west of Memphis by the people under the authority of the scribe Bukentuef'. The documents, then, are the records of this Bukentuef, drawn up while overseeing the construction of the tomb of the royal scribe and general May. Remarkably, the papyri have a recorded provenance: they were found in 1927 during James E. Quibell's excavations in the area to the south of the step pyramid of Djoser, in two chambers belonging to a Sixth Dynasty mastaba. The excavators suggested that Bukentuef had used these rooms as a convenient shelter in which to carry out his paperwork, which would account for their presence in the Old Kingdom tomb.¹⁰⁰ The general's tomb has not yet been found, but as Robert J. Demarée has argued, it (and the tomb of an anonymous vizier, presumably Hori) would probably have been somewhere in the neighbourhood of this mastaba, although so far only one Twentieth Dynasty tomb has been identified at Saqqara, that of the 'royal cupbearer/butler' Hekamaatre-nehe.¹⁰¹

The papyri preserve the daily journal of the construction project, recording everything from Bukentuef's initial arrival at Memphis and his delivery of the necessary documents and permits, to his assembly of a crew of workers, and then the gradual progress of the building work. It has a wealth of details regarding the flow of resources surrounding such a project, from the journeys made to pick up rations (and the hiring of a boat for that purpose) to the recruiting of a labour force and the procurement of building equipment like rope, chisels and a donkey, but it is not clear who is funding the work as a whole. The tomb-owner is elsewhere in the dossier addressed, in a draft letter, as 'standard-bearer of the king on the right (of the king), royal scribe and overseer of the army',¹⁰² suggesting someone with personal ties to the king who would be in a position to receive royal patronage for such an undertaking. The draft letter just mentioned is in fact followed by another draft letter, this one addressed to the king himself, although the space following the traditional

⁹⁹ *KRI* VII, 269: 7–8.

¹⁰⁰ J.E. Quibell and A. Olver, 'An ancient Egyptian horse', *ASAE* 26 (1926), 172. Cf. J. van Dijk, *The New Kingdom Necropolis of Memphis*, 25 n. 45.

¹⁰¹ Demarée, *Saqqara Newsletter* 6 (2008), 10; *PM*², III/2, 558.

¹⁰² P. Cairo JdE 52003, verso 1–3; *KRI* VII, 267: 12–16.

greeting formulae and the titulary of the king was left blank.¹⁰³ Similarly, the fragmentary third document (P. MMA 3569 + Vienna 3934/3937+9352) refers to staff associated with temple domains of the king, and there are phrases suggesting further draft letters to the king: '[...] in life, prosperity and health! This is a message to let his majesty know [...];'¹⁰⁴ '[...] in life, prosperity and health! I praise Amun-Re, king of the gods [...] our lord, l.p.h., the perfect one, l.p.h.. I am saying to Re-Har[akhty...] and all the gods <in> heaven and <on> earth: 'Give health to pharaoh, l.p.h., my lord, l.p.h., the perfect one, l.p.h., [...] millions of Sed-festivals. He is the great ruler, l.p.h., of all lands forever [...]'.'¹⁰⁵ And finally, in a broken context, Bukentuef addresses a 'royal scribe and overseer of the treasury'.¹⁰⁶ Although many aspects of New Kingdom private tomb construction remain poorly understood, not least the procedure of commissioning and funding of such an operation, the implication here is that the resources of the king are involved, perhaps in addition to resources available to the tomb-owner himself through his office and social position.¹⁰⁷ This royal involvement probably explains Bukentuef's habit of noting the location of the king in the dating formulae, a feature paralleled by the palace accounts of Seti I and Seti II discussed above.

The preserved parts of the journal deals with a period of just over 8 months in years 15 and 16 of Ramesses III, but the records are fragmentary and long periods are unaccounted for.

DATE	LOCATION	DOCUMENT
Year 15 (4 Peret, day 5 or 6)	Piramesse, 'house of Ramesses Meryamun'	P. Cairo JdE 52002, 3–4
Year 15, 4 Peret, day 14	Piramesse, 'house of Ramesses Meryamun'	P. Cairo JdE 52002, verso 1
Year 15, 1 Shomu, day 9	Piramesse, 'house of Ramesses Meryamun'	P. Cairo JdE 52003, 1
Year 16 (date unspecified: perhaps 3 Akhet)	Piramesse, 'house of Ramesses Meryamun, who brightens Iunu'	P. MMA 3569 + Vienna 3934/3937 + 9352, 1.A1–3

Fig. 3. A list of entries showing the location of Ramesses III during year 15 and 16 of his reign according to the journal of a tomb construction project at Saqqara.

¹⁰³ P. Cairo JdE 52003, verso 4–8; *KRI* VII, 268: 1–6. Another papyrus (P. Cairo JdE 52004) belonging to this dossier is an actual letter, but this has yet to be published and its contents remain unknown: cf. Demarée, *Saqqara Newsletter* 6 (2008), 7; *KRI* VII, 268: 7.

¹⁰⁴ *KRI* VII, 270: 10.

¹⁰⁵ *KRI* VII, 271: 8–12.

¹⁰⁶ *KRI* VII, 272: 8; cf. 270: 10.

¹⁰⁷ On the issues involved, see C.J. Eyre, 'Work and the Organisation of Work in the New Kingdom', in M.A. Powell (ed.), *Labor in the Ancient Near East* (New Haven, 1987), 183–8.

‘(Beginning of the document-instruction which the scribe Pentaweret made in) regnal year 10, FOURTH MONTH OF AKHET, DAY 7. One was in the house of Ramesses Meryamun, l.p.h., of the great ka of Re-Horakhty.’¹¹³

Here the phrase occurs at the very beginning of the manuscript, as part of the dating formula for the copying of the text, a similar use to that observable in administrative documents (year 10 is probably that of Merenptah).¹¹⁴ Its presence here, in what is a semi-literary manuscript,¹¹⁵ is curious, but as with the example immediately above, P. Sallier I belonged to a scribe who was associated, at least indirectly, with the royal treasury: Pentaweret’s superior Amenemone (who is mentioned several times in the text) was a ‘chief scribe of the treasury of pharaoh, l.p.h.’¹¹⁶

The use of the phrase ‘One was in’ (*iw.tw m*) + location is not exclusive to administrative accounts. It is also employed in other contexts, perhaps primarily as a variant of the common practice of noting the whereabouts of the king in relation to the publication of royal decrees,¹¹⁷ or juridical documents based on the authority of the king. Examples include the text of the Amarna boundary stela, issued ‘on this day: One was in Akhetaten’ (*m hrw pn iw.tw m 3ht-ittn*),¹¹⁸ and the restoration stela of Tutankhamun which was issued ‘on this day: One was in the palace which is in the House of Aakheperkare’ (*hrw pn iw.tw m ḥ imy pr ʿ3-hpr-kʿ-ṛʿ*).¹¹⁹ A related example is the land endowment recorded on a stela from the temple of Isis, Mistress of the Pyramids, at Giza, where king Ay provided for one of his officials.¹²⁰ The inscription starts off with a standard dating formula (‘Regnal year 3, third month of Shomu, day one...’) and the titulary of Ay, followed by the observation that ‘On this day: One was in Memphis’ (*hrw pn iw.tw m Mn-nfr*). The rest of the inscription describes the location of the land as being ‘upon the fields of the House of Aakheperkare (Thutmose I) and the House of Menkheperure (Thutmose IV)’, and gives its size as 54 (?) arouras. The text has a pronounced juridical character, and

¹¹³ Gardiner, *Late-Egyptian Miscellanies*, 79: 5–6.

¹¹⁴ Gardiner, *Late-Egyptian Miscellanies*, xvii.

¹¹⁵ On the Late Egyptian Miscellanies as a genre, see F. Hagen, ‘Literature, Transmission, and the Late Egyptian Miscellanies’, in R.J. Dann (ed.), *Current Research in Egyptology 2004* (Oxford, 2006), 84–99; note that this particular manuscript includes part of *The Instruction of Amenemhat* on the back.

¹¹⁶ Gardiner, *Late-Egyptian Miscellanies*, 79: 9; 80: 3, 80: 14–15; 82: 5; 83: 3; 84: 4; 85: 7; 85: 15; 86: 10; 87: 5; 88: 3.

¹¹⁷ For examples of royal decrees or memorial texts dated this way, see notes 77 and 81 above.

¹¹⁸ Murnane and Van Siclen, *Boundary Stelae*, 36.

¹¹⁹ *Urk.* IV, 2031: 15.

¹²⁰ Cairo GC 34187. This is one of the few surviving monuments dated to the reign of Ay: Hassan, *Great Sphinx*, 101–2. For a discussion, see O. Schaden, *The God’s Father Ay* (PhD diss., University of Minnesota, 1977), 254–7; R. Hari, *Horemheb et la reine Moutnedjemet, ou la fin d’une dynastie* (Geneva, 1964), pl. XXI and fig. 54.

includes the witnesses to the endowment: a 'royal scribe and overseer of the Two Granaries, Ramose', the 'royal scribe, Meryre', as well as a scribe called Tjay.¹²¹ Although a private monument, the subject of the inscription — a royal endowment — and the listing of high officials associated with the royal administration as witnesses, suggests that this too conforms to the practice of noting the location of the king in connection with the use of royal resources.¹²² The consistency of this practice seems evident, but not every occasion on which royal resources were expended need have called for this information to be included. For example, although the exact organisational relationship between the dockyards of Thutmose III and the royal administration is not entirely clear, none of the dated entries in the records of that institution include information about the location of the king, but this could conceivably also be due to their early date.¹²³

The administrative documents discussed above cannot be interpreted in isolation from other sources, but a full analysis falls outside the scope of this article. Other categories of texts may provide additional information: for example, a letter from Ramesses IX, to the High Priest of Amun, Ramessesnakhte, from year 2 of his reign, found on a papyrus roll pasted together from several letters sent to the High Priest, requests a significant amount of very high quality eye-paint to be supplied to 'where(ever) One is' (*p3 nty tw tw im*), without further specification.¹²⁴ Another, contemporary letter from Ramesses IX, addressed to the Viceroy of Kush, Panehsy, requests the immediate delivery of various goods, including 'a carrying-platform of this great goddess', and 'carnelian, red jasper, crystal, corundum, and very many flowers of saffron as well as lapis-lazuli coloured flowers'.¹²⁵ The delivery address is not given as any particular town or palace, but simply to the place 'where(ever) One is'.¹²⁶ What both of these letters seem to imply is that the location of the king will be known to the recipient, and that this is not necessarily the 'Residence'. The expectation

¹²¹ P. Lacau, *Catalogue général des antiquités égyptiennes du musée du Caire, Nos. 34065–34189: Siècles de la XVIIIe dynastie* (Cairo, 1957), 233–4; *Urk. IV*, 2109: 4–2110: 4.

¹²² For the type and format, compare e.g. the inscription on the statue of Nebnefer from Karnak: *Urk. IV*, 1884: 7–1886: 11.

¹²³ S.R.K. Glanville, 'Records of a Royal Dockyard of the Time of Tuthmosis III: Papyrus British Museum 10056', *ZÄS* 66 (1931), 105–21; *ZÄS* 68 (1932), 7–41. The 'king's son' Amen-hotep is said to be the senior official in charge, but it may not have been a part of the royal administration for which the location of the king was a particular concern.

¹²⁴ *KRI VI*, 518: 6; 519: 7; Wentz, *Letters*, 40 n. 11 assumes that the letter was sent from the Delta Residence, but there is nothing in the letter to suggest this; the standard epistolographic formula employed at the end of the letter states that 'The royal household is safe and sound' (*pr nswt ḥ.w.s. ḏ snb*), but this refers to an abstract institution, not the physical royal palace.

¹²⁵ P. Turin 1896: *KRI VI*, 234: 7–235: 7.

¹²⁶ *KRI VI*, 735: 4: *p3 nty tw tw im*.

that the addressee will be aware of ‘where One is’ may suggest an extensive dissemination of this information, a practice which seems to find its fullest expression in the habit of royal scribes of noting the location of the king in administrative documents. Letters never survive in sufficient quantities to demonstrate a network of communication like that posited here, but the general practice finds a parallel in the regular letters sent back to the temple of Ptah at Memphis from one of its grain barges travelling on the Nile, and one should perhaps imagine a similar procedure in relation to the travels of the king.¹²⁷ The ship’s logs from such grain barges also demonstrate the practice of noting the physical location of the ship as part of the dating formulas employed in the headings, allowing their itinerary to be reconstructed in some detail. The form of these entries is identical to those in the royal administrative documents, naturally with the omission of the king as subject: ‘Year 52, second month of Peret, day 26: In Piramesse’.¹²⁸ Here, like in the royal accounts, the incorporation of the geographical location indicates both mobility and a desire to keep track of movement.

Conclusions

My argument here has been that New Kingdom pharaohs should be seen as highly mobile, and that they, along with a suitable entourage or court, travelled extensively throughout the country (and beyond) on a semi-regular basis. Quite apart from military expeditions to subjugate foreign lands, such domestic travels would have been part of a deliberate strategy to maintain and consolidate power within Egypt. The occasions when the king undertook such journeys would have been varied, and although we are rarely told the purpose of these excursions, royal decrees and documents of the New Kingdom, as well as the “list” of journeys of Amenemhat II in his famous *Annals*, provide at least an overview: religious and cultic visits to major and minor temples (perhaps primarily in relation to festivals and the installation of cult statues), inspection of building works (including quarrying and gold mining), and “fishing and fowling” trips to the fertile Fayum-oasis. The precise activities associated with these royal visits, as well as their form and frequency, are less easy to pin down, but scattered references to the preparations required show the considerable logistical challenges involved in receiving the king and his followers. There is no good reason to assume that the economic aspects of such travels — the financial burden to local magnates, the potential gain in prestige and access to royal favour — played a less central role in the structuring and function of power-relations in Egypt than in other pre-modern monarchical societies.

¹²⁷ J.J. Janssen, *Two Ancient Egyptian Ship’s Logs* (Leiden, 1961), 5–6.

¹²⁸ Janssen, *Two Ancient Egyptian Ship’s Logs*, 11–17.

The uneven survival of the sources notwithstanding, it is significant that in those cases where documents relating to the daily operation of royal palaces and other institutions catering for the king survive — the baking accounts of Seti I at Memphis, the Gurob palace accounts — these emphasise the location of the king as part of their standardised dating formula. We have no comparable New Kingdom material from other palaces, but the practice, although not extensively attested, is consistent among royal scribes over a period of several hundred years, from Amenhotep III to Ramesses III. Implicit in this practice is a concern for the present location of the king, which is not a given: he is not necessarily to be found in the “capital” (however one chooses to define this word in the Egyptian context). The frequency of such travels may even have been the impetus for the scribal tradition of keeping track of his whereabouts in the dating formulae; the king’s precise location was a matter of great importance to individuals charged with the running of royal institutions, and to those who were responsible for the expenditure of royal resources.