



Having a Break to Take a Drink

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ARTICLE INFO Abstract

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The artist in ancient Egypt used to add a more natural touch to the daily life scenes. This clearly appeared in the harvest scenes in several themes. One of these themes represented a worker having a break to take a drink. The subject of the research is centered on this occasional theme concentrating on its natural features; the worker himself, his identity, the way he holds the jar of drink, the shape of the jar and the type of the drink, as well as the presenter of the drink, if was represented. The theme was found in several ancient Egyptian tombs and also in the tomb of Petosiris at Tuna el Gabal in Minia Governorate that dates to the Graeco-Roman period. The research aims to discuss all the natural features of the theme and compare between those of the ancient Egyptian themes and what is represented in the Graeco-Roman theme to find the main characteristics and differences of each one. The research employs the descriptive and analytical methodology for the discussed models of the theme and their captions to achieve the aimed results of the study. One of the main results is that the theme of a worker having a short break of work to quench his thirst appeared in two main contexts of the ancient Egyptian and Graeco-Roman outdoor daily life scenes.

I. Introduction

The ancient Egyptian daily life scenes indicate that there was a time and place designated for workers to rest and have a short break to quench their thirst after a hard day's work. Minor figures appear in different contexts and types of scenes accepting a drink or drinking from an earthenware vessel after stopping work and taking a short break. They are occasionally represented in such scene types; pasture, harvest, manufacture, market, cargo-boat and sailing-boat scenes. Most of this occasional theme date to the Old Kingdom period and are very clear and simple in terms of their subject matter, and details.¹

The break is the pausing time, during which workers snatch moments for refreshment. The

word that means "stop, take a break" in the ancient Egyptian language is  ² In the 12th Dynasty tomb of Snbi at Meir, in the scene of sowing on the center of the north wall, the young worker that is depicted driving the yoke of oxen tends to have a break and calls the

¹ Harpur, Y. M. (2011). *Earthenware vessels in Old Kingdom two-dimensional art*. 456.

² *Wb* I, 6.2-8.

ploughman behind him to stop for a pause;  *imi 3bt nfr hrw* "Come, cease, the day is nice".³

The word "3b" is mentioned in the text of the 13th Dynasty stela of Horemkha'uef that is recently in the Metropolitan Museum of Art ((New York, MMA 35.7.55), line [A.14]:

iw di.n Hr d<r>p n=i 3b.w n.w k3t m pr n-c3,t-n

"Horus caused me to be given a break from work (lit.: cessation of labour) in the house/temple".⁴

The outdoor type of ancient Egyptian scenes like pasture and certain stages of agriculture, harvest and winnowing, show that the place where the workers usually rest and have a short break is under the shade of a tree, which is always provided with a water animal skin or sometimes a round water vessel with a long narrow neck hanging from its branch.

A scene in the 5th Dynasty tomb of Nefer and Kahay at Saqqara (Fig.1) depicts a goatherd twisting a piece of cord around the long neck of his round water vessel and attaching the untied end to a tree branch. He accomplishes this by keeping his water source as chilly as possible and far away from his herd of curious goats. The jar occasionally still has vestiges of its original shade, in this example a pale reddish-brown intended to mimic burnt clay.⁵



Fig. 1: A goatherd hangs around water vessel to a tree branch, the 5th Dynasty tomb of Nefer and Kahay at Saqqara (Source: <https://www.meretsegerbooks.com/gallery/526/nefer-and-kahay>, last accessed on 16 April 2024, 2:14 PM)

In the Louvre 5th Dynasty chapel of Akhetotep, a balding goatherd is depicted sitting under a tree and drinking from a round water vessel (Fig.2).

³ Merzeban, R. (2020). Work Commitment in Middle and New Kingdom Texts. *Journal of Association of Arab Universities for Tourism and Hospitality*, 19(3), 79-80, 91, Fig. 1.

⁴ The stela of Horemkha'uef was originally erected in his tomb at Hierakonpolis. He was an official responsible for measuring fields for taxation purposes. He also served as a priest in the local temple of Horus, the patron god of Hierakonpolis. Porter, B. and Moss, R.L.B. (1937). *Topographical Bibliography of ancient Egyptian hieroglyphic texts, reliefs, and paintings*. Vol. V. Oxford. 197 [B]; Hayes, W.C. (1947). Horemkha'uef of Nehken and his trip to It-Towe. *JEA* 33, 3-11.

⁵ Porter, B. and Moss, R.L.B. (1937). *Topographical Bibliography of ancient Egyptian hieroglyphic texts, reliefs, and paintings*. Volume III. Oxford. 639-41; Moussa, A. M., & Altenmüller, H. (1971) *The Tomb of Nefer and Ka-hay. Old Kingdom Tombs at the Causeway of King Unas at Saqqara*. Archäologische Veröffentlichungen 5. Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Abteilung Kairo. Philipp von Zabern. Mainz am Rhein. 20, 27. Pls. 1-2, 4, 19.

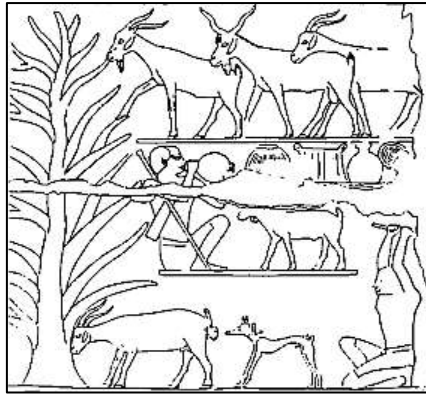


Fig. 2: A goatherd sits under a tree and drinks from a round water vessel, 5th Dynasty chapel of Akhethotep (Source: <https://collections.louvre.fr/en/ark:/53355/cl010077681>, last accessed on 16 April 2024, 2:14 PM)

The depiction of the water animal skin hanging from a tree branch is seen in the Middle Kingdom scenes of pasture and animal husbandry (Fig. 3).⁶



Fig. 3: The depiction of the water animal skin hanging from a tree branch in the 11th Dynasty tomb of Khety No.17 at Beni Hassan, West wall, South side (Source: Kanawati, N., & Woods, A. (2010). *Beni Hassan: art and daily life in an Egyptian province*. Supreme Council of Antiquities. Pl. 179)

The Harvest scene in the 18th Dynasty tomb of Menna TT 69, the inspector of estates and overseer of harvests, shows two workers taking a nap under a tree at the border of the field, one of them sits idly on a stool, while the other plays a tune on a long reed like flute. The one on the left appears to be dozing off. A goatskin that is most likely full of water is dangling from the tree's branch (Fig.4).⁷

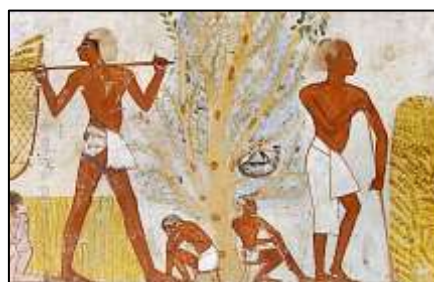


Fig. 4: the theme of workers taking a nap under a tree, 18th Dynasty tomb of Menna TT 69 (Source: Davies, N. M., & Gardiner, A. H. (1936). *Ancient Egyptian Paintings Selected, Copied, and Described*. Volume I. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Pl. L)

⁶ Newberry, P. E. (1893). *Beni Hassan*. II. London. Pl. XII.

⁷ Davies, N. M., & Gardiner, A. H. (1936). *Ancient Egyptian Paintings Selected, Copied, and Described*. Volume III. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 99, Pl. L; Wreszinski, W. (1923). *Atlas zur altägyptischen Kulturgeschichte*. Teil I. J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung. Leipzig. Tafel 233.

The same figure of the worker taking a break and sitting idly or sleeping, in the previous theme of Menna TT 69, is depicted in the harvest scene in the 18th Dynasty tombs of Enene TT 81 and Khaemhat TT 57, but here for an overseer (Fig.5a, b).⁸

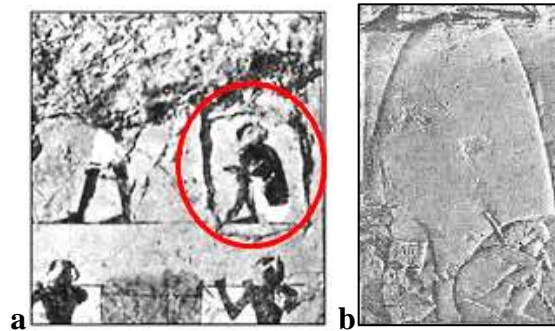


Fig. 5: The figure of an overseer taking a break and sitting idly or sleeping in the tombs of Enene TT 81(a) and Khaemhat TT 57 (b). (Source: Wreszinski, W. (1923). *Atlas zur altägyptischen Kulturgeschichte*. Teil I. J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung. Leipzig. Tafel 58, 192)

The depiction of one of the workers taking a break to refresh himself by the water of the animal skin hanging in the tree's branch is represented in the 18th Dynasty Theban tombs, usually at the left-hand end of the scenes of agriculture on the east wall of the transverse chamber, for example the themes of Nakht TT 52 (Fig. 6a), and Khaemhat TT 57 (Fig.6b).⁹



Fig. 6: the theme of the thirsty worker drinking from the water animal skin in Nakht TT 52 (a) and Khaemhat TT 52 (b).

(Source: https://www.osirisnet.net/popupImage.php?img=/tombes/nobles/nakht52/photo/nakht_tc_drawing_east_wall_s3_ndgd.gif&lang=en&sw=1024&sh=768, last accessed on 16 April 2024, 2:30 PM; Wreszinski, W. (1923). *Atlas zur altägyptischen Kulturgeschichte*. Teil I. J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung. Leipzig. Tafel 9)

In the agricultural stages, the winnowing process created a lot of dust, so many scenes were depicted against a background of a cloud of dust being carried away by the wind. Dust and the heat of the sun make workers thirsty, so a water animal skin was hung in a tree near the workers necessary when needing a short break to quench their thirst (Fig. 7).¹⁰

⁸ Wreszinski, W. (1923). *Atlas zur altägyptischen Kulturgeschichte*. Teil I. J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung. Leipzig. Tafel 58.

⁹ Wreszinski, W. (1923). *Atlas zur altägyptischen Kulturgeschichte*. Teil I. J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung. Leipzig. Tafel 9; Lepsius, C. R. (1849). *Denkmäler Aus Agypten und Athiopien. Zweite Abtheilung. Denkmäler des Alten Reiches*. Band III. Nicolaische Buchhandlung. Berlin. 77d.

¹⁰ Klebs, L. (1934). *Die Reliefs und Malereien des Neuen Reiches*. III, Heidelberg. P.14f.

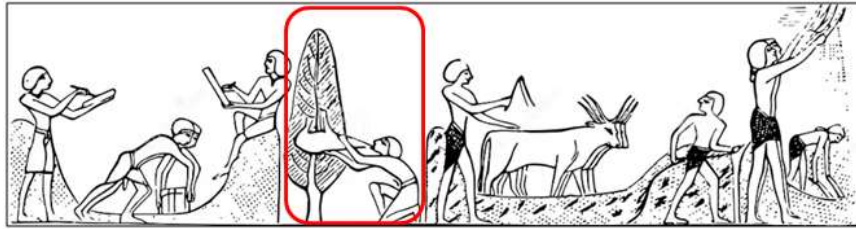


Fig. 7: the theme of a worker quenches his thirst from an water animal skin, 18th Dynasty Theban tomb (Source: Wilkinson, J. G. (1841). *A second series of the Manners and customs of the ancient Egyptians, including their religion, agriculture, &c. Derived from a comparison of the paintings, sculptures, and monuments still existing, with the accounts of ancient authors.* Volume I. London. 86. Fig. 428)

The water animal skin was known in the ancient Egyptian civilization from the prehistoric times until the Graeco-Roman period.¹¹ There are various names for the water skin in the ancient Egyptian language, as well as many determinatives indicating it (Table 1). The animal skin from which the water bag was made varies depending on the nature of its use. If the bag is for individual use, it is made of goat skin to be small in size, light in weight, and easy to carry. But if it was for communal use, it was made from the skins of cattle, such as cows and bulls, to be attached to wooden stands or tree trunks. One of the main daily life uses of the water skin being a means of cooling water on harsh summer days, so it was represented in various contexts of the ancient Egyptian daily life scenes related to workers, farmers and craftsmen.¹²



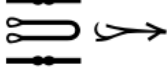


	The name	Date of use
1	 <i>mskat</i> ¹³	New Kingdom till Roman Period
2	 <i>hnt</i> ¹⁴	Documented since the Old Kingdom
3	 <i>sts</i> ¹⁵	Middle Kingdom
4	 <i>šdw</i> ¹⁶	Middle and New Kingdoms
5	 <i>dhr</i> ¹⁷	Middle Kingdom

Table 1: The ancient Egyptian names for the water animal skin

¹¹ Because hunting was early man's primary method of subsistence, it was believed that he turned the remains of his victim into ever-more-useful things. Rawhide was cut or tom and tied into pouches for carrying food and water, while bones were fashioned into primitive tools. Water was carried in animal hide pouches, similar to modern canteens, for extended hunting expeditions that frequently lasted several days. Wine and other liquids are still transported in sewed leather skin bags known as "botas" nowadays. (<https://www.uni-kassel.de/fb11/agrар/fachgebiete/-/einrichtungen/versuchs-und-demonstrationsanlage-fuer-bewaesserungs-und-solartechnik-am-sande/wasser/a-guide-to-innovations-in-irrigation>, last accessed on 20 September 2023, 8 AM). عطا الله، رضا علي السيد (٢٠٢٠). قرية الماء ودورها الدنيوي والديني في مصر القديمة. مجلة الإتحاد العام للأثاريين العرب. المجلد الحادي والعشرون. العدد الثاني. ١٤٩ - ١٨١.

¹³ Gardiner, A. (1957). *Egyptian Grammar. (Sign – List)*. Oxford: Griffith Institute. Ashmolean Museum.464, F. 27.

¹⁴ *Wb* III, 367.

¹⁵ *Wb* IV. 362.6

¹⁶ *Wb* IV, 560.4-5; Such leather bag is currently used to transport water across the desert (Wilkinson, J. G. (1879). *The Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians*. Volume II. New York: Scribner and Welford. 19 – 20.

¹⁷ *Wb* V, 481.

In ancient Egypt children participated in the work fields and pasture.¹⁸ Herding is a difficult job for a child. It makes him feel tired and thirsty. This is clear in a distinctive theme found on the south wall, second upper register to the right, of the 11th Dynasty tomb of Baqet III at Beni Hassan (Fig.8), where a boy quenching his thirst by suckling milk from the cow together with its young calf in the same time.¹⁹



Fig. 8: A boy quenching his thirst by suckling milk from a cow together with its young calf in the same time, the 11th Dynasty tomb of Baqet III at Beni Hassan (Source: Kanawati, N., & Woods, A. (2010). *Beni Hassan: art and daily life in an Egyptian province*. Supreme Council of Antiquities. Pl. 164)

The occasional theme of a worker having a short break from work to drink and quench his thirst is clearly and more represented in the daily life scenes that are related to pasture and animal-husbandry and harvest as well. Thus, the main purpose of the present study concentrates on discussing such occasional theme in its different daily life contexts.

II. Objectives of the study

- (a) To examine the ancient Egyptian and Graeco-Roman daily life scenes that depict the theme of the thirsty worker and indicate the main contexts of the theme; the animal-husbandry and agricultural scenes.
- (b) To discuss the natural features of the theme in each context; the worker himself, his identity, the attitude and the way he holds the jar of drink, the shape of the jar and the type of the drink, as well as the presenter of the drink, if was represented, to the worker.
- (c) To find the main characteristics and differences of the natural features of the theme of the thirsty worker in its different contexts.
- (d) To indicate the earliest and latest depiction for the theme of a worker having a short break of work to quench his thirst in the ancient Egyptian and Graeco-Roman daily life scenes.
- (e) To indicate the number and date of the themes, the focus of the study, in the ancient Egyptian and Graeco-Roman animal-husbandry and agricultural scenes.
- (f) To determine the more numerous and continuous context of scenes that included the theme of a worker having a short break of work to quench his thirst.

III. Methodology

The research employs descriptive and analytical methodology for the discussed models of the theme of the worker having a short break to drink and quench his thirst and their captions to achieve the aimed results of the study.

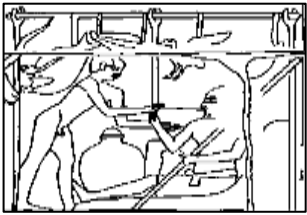



¹⁸ Galal Abdulmoez, M., El Sabban, S., and El Kilany, E. (2018). Scenes Depicting Children in Service-work and Servitude Duties in Ancient Egypt (A Comparative Study). *مجلة الآداب والعلوم الإنسانية*, 86(4), 840-863.

¹⁹ Newberry, P. E. (1893). *Beni Hassan*. II. London. Pl. VII; Davies, N. De.G. (1933). The graphic Work of the Expedition at 1931-1932. *BMMA* xxviii. NO 4. Fig. 10; EZZ, M. (2014). A Study of Animal Motherhood scenes in the private tombs in Ancient Egypt. *Journal of Association of Arab Universities for Tourism and Hospitality*, 11(1). P. 40, Fig. 38; Kanawati, N., & Woods, A. (2010). *Beni Hassan: art and daily life in an Egyptian province*. (1st English ed.). Supreme Council of Antiquities. Fig. 164.

IV. Discussion and results

The theme of a seated overseer, either drinking from a vessel, or accepting a drink in a vessel in the context of pasture and animal-husbandry scenes

In the ancient Egyptian daily life scenes that are related to pasture and animal-husbandry, the overseer responsible for watching the animal-tending activities is seen in a number of tombs, usually in the upper register of the main scene, drinking or eating or even receiving drink or food from an attendant during his working time. The overseer drinking from a bowl is considered to be a standard motif in the ancient Egyptian art.²⁰ Table (2) displays a number of examples for this theme:

Scene detail	Tomb Name	Tomb No: A	Site/ Dynasty	Main References
 Fig. 9	Sekhemankhptah	D 41	Saqqara 5 th Dynasty	Simpson, W. K. (1976). <i>The Offering Chapel of Sekhem-ankh-ptah in the Museum of Fine Arts</i> . Boston. 9, Fig. 4, Pls. vi, vii [a], Pl. C.
 Fig. 10	Akhetotep	D 64	Saqqara 5 th Dynasty	Davies, N. de G. (1901). <i>The Mastaba of Ptahhetep and Akhetetep at Saqqareh</i> . Volume II. The Mastaba. The Sculptures of Akhetetep. Archaeological Survey of Egypt, Ninth Memoir. Egypt Exploration Fund. London.16, Pl. xvii.
 Fig.11	Niankh-khnum and Khnumhotep		Saqqara 5 th Dynasty	Moussa, A. M. and Altenmüller, H. (1977). <i>Das Grab des Nianchchnum und Chnumhotep. Old Kingdom Tombs at the Causeway of King Unas at Saqqara</i> . Archäologisches Veröffentlichungen 21. Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Abteilung Kairo. Philipp von Zabern. Mainz am Rhein. pp. 153-5. Taf. 76, 78 [a, b] (details).
 Fig.12	Neferherenptah		Saqqara 5 th Dynasty	https://www.osirisnet.net/popupImage.php?img=/mastabas/neferherenptah/photo/neferherenptah_bs_10501_03.jpg&lang=en&sw=1280&sh=1024 , last accessed on 17 April 2024, 12: 18 AM

²⁰ Brovarski, E. (2001). *The Senedjemib Complex*. Part I. The Mastabas of Senedjemib Inti (G 2370), Khnumenti (G 2374) and Senedjemib Mehi (G 2378). Giza Mastabas. Volume 7. Art of the Ancient World. Museum of Fine Arts. Boston. P. 50.




 <p style="text-align: center;">Fig.13</p>	Iymery	G 6020	Giza 5 th Dynasty	Weeks, K. R. (1994). <i>Mastabas of Cemetery G 6000. Including G 6010 (Neferbaupthah); G 6020 (Iymery); G 6030 (Ity); G 6040 (Shepseskafankh)</i> . Giza Mastabas, Volume 5. Department of Ancient Egyptian, Nubian, and Near Eastern Art. Museum of Fine Arts. Boston. 42, Fig. 34.
 <p style="text-align: center;">Fig.14</p>	Kadua		Giza 5 th Dynasty	Hassan, S. (1950). <i>Excavations at Giza 1934-1935</i> . Volume VI [3]. The Faculty of Arts, Fouad I University. Service des Antiquités de l'Egypte. Cairo. 99-100. Fig. 80. Pl. xli.
 <p style="text-align: center;">Fig.15</p>	Iasen	G 2196	Giza 6 th Dynasty	Simpson, W. K. (1980). <i>Mastabas of the Western Cemetery: Part I. Giza Mastabas</i> . Volume 4. Boston. 20, Pls. xliii [b], xliv [b], Fig. 30.

Table 2: Displaying examples for the theme of a seated overseer drinking or accepting a drink in the context of pasture and animal-husbandry scenes (Source: Designed by the Researcher)

According to the displayed examples in the previous table, the theme of a seated overseer either drinking or accepting an offered drink is mostly found in pasture and animal-husbandry compositions that date back to the end of the Old Kingdom period, mid-5th Dynasty to the early 6th Dynasty. Most of the examples are found in the tombs at Saqqara and Giza. The overseer usually appears as an elderly man sitting and relaxing on a low wickerwork seat and a staff of office held at a diagonal inside a makeshift shelter near one or more pasture related activities, such as men feeding oxen, milking a cow, attending to the birth of a calf, or cooking loaves. The position of the theme is typically towards the very end of the composition, near the extreme left or right of the other activities.²¹

The overseer appeared in all the figures in a relaxed mode. This is reflected in the position of his body and the way he sits. He is usually seated on a low wickerwork seat with a back rest at or above his shoulders level with the torso usually vertical as seen in most of figures except for the 5th Dynasty theme of Kadua (Fig. 14),²² where the torso is reclined backwards giving a sense of relaxation or even tiredness. The two legs usually bent forward at the knee in most of the themes (as in Figs. 11 to 15) and rarely extended forwards as in the 5th Dynasty theme of Sekhemankhptah (Fig.9).²³ An infrequent or unique leg position is seen in the 5th Dynasty theme of Akhethotep (Fig.10), where one leg is bent on top of another.²⁴ Another

²¹Harpur, Y. M. (2011). *Earthenware vessels in Old Kingdom two-dimensional art*. 448.

²²Hassan, S. (1950). *Excavations at Giza 1934-1935*. Volume VI [3]. The Faculty of Arts, Fouad I University. Service des Antiquités de l'Egypte. Cairo. 99-100, Fig. 80, Pl. xli.

²³Simpson, W. K. (1976). *The Offering Chapel of Sekhem-ankh-ptah in the Museum of Fine Arts*. Boston. 9. Fig. 4, Pls. vi, vii [a], Pl. C.

²⁴Davies, N. de G. (1901). *The Mastaba of Ptahhetep and Akhethetep at Saqqareh*. Volume II. The Mastaba. The Sculptures of Akhethetep. Archaeological Survey of Egypt, Ninth Memoir. Egypt Exploration Fund. London.16, Pl. xvii.

feature of relaxation appeared in the act of holding and sniffing a lotus blossom that is seen in the 5th Dynasty themes of Akhethotep and Iymery (Figs.10, 13).²⁵

The overseer usually receives the drink from a young worker, who is represented standing and slightly leaning towards him. The worker is seen naked (in Figs.9, 10, 13, 15) or wearing a simple short kilt (in Figs.11, 12). In the theme of Niankh-khnum and Khnumhotep (Fig. 11) the worker or the herdsman utters the following words while presenting drink to his overseer; "This is agreeable! You will be content with it".²⁶

The drink is usually held in a light-weight earthenware container. In most of the displayed themes, the container is a shallow bowl with a rolled rim (Figs.9, 11 to 15), while in the theme of Akhethotep the container is a long vessel (Figs.10).²⁷ The drink seems to be milk due to the nature of the pasture and animal-husbandry activities that found nearby the theme and also the variation in the shape of the offered container is a characteristic feature of the Old Kingdom milking scenes.²⁸

Examples for the theme of the seated thirsty overseer in other contexts of scenes

The following two examples present the figure of the seated overseer who accepts the drink from a young worker to quench his thirst during his break of work. In spite of the different contexts of the two scenes, the figures of the overseer are similar with slight differences; the same image of an elderly man and the same attitude as well. They differ in the seat, on which the figure of the overseer rests. It is the usual low wickerwork seat with a back rest found in the themes displayed in (table 2) and in (Fig.16),²⁹ while in (Fig.17) is a small, mat-like mattress of very thin thickness.³⁰

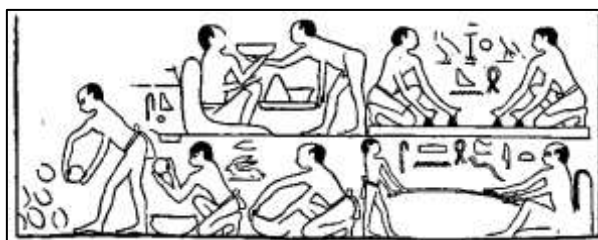


Fig. 16: The theme of the thirsty overseer in the context of mat making, 5th Dynasty tomb of Nikauhor at Saqqara (Source: Quibell, J.E. (1909). *Excavations at Saqqara 1907-1908*. Cairo. 25, Pl. lxvi [2])

²⁵ Weeks, K. R. (1994). *Mastabas of Cemetery G 6000. Including G 6010 (Neferbaupth); G 6020 (Iymery); G 6030 (Ity); G 6040 (Shepseskafankh)*. Giza Mastabas, Volume 5. Department of Ancient Egyptian, Nubian, and Near Eastern Art. Museum of Fine Arts. Boston. 42, fig. 34.

²⁶ Moussa, A. M. and Altenmüller, H. (1977). *Das Grab des Nianchchnum und Chnumhotep. Old Kingdom Tombs at the Causeway of King Unas at Saqqara*. Archäologische Veröffentlichungen 21. Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Abteilung Kairo. Philipp von Zabern. Mainz am Rhein. 153-5, Taf. 76, 78 [a, b] (details);

https://www.osirisnet.net/mastabas/niankhkhnum_khnoumhotep/e_niankhkhnum_khnoumhotep_04.htm, last accessed on 16 April 2024, 6:30 PM.

²⁷ Davies, N. de G. (1901). *The Mastaba of Ptahhetep and Akhethetep at Saqqareh*. Volume II. The Mastaba. The Sculptures of Akhethetep. Archaeological Survey of Egypt, Ninth Memoir. Egypt Exploration Fund. London. 16. Pl. xvii.

²⁸ Harpur, Y. M. (2011). *Earthenware vessels in Old Kingdom two-dimensional art*. 448.

²⁹ Quibell, J.E. (1909). *Excavations at Saqqara 1907-1908*. Cairo. 25. Pl. lxvi [2].

³⁰ Möhr, H.T. (1943). *The Mastaba of Hetep-her-akhti*. Study on an Ancient Tomb Chapel in the Museum of Antiquities Leiden. Mededeelingen en Verhandelingen No. 5. Leiden. 60, Fig. 30.

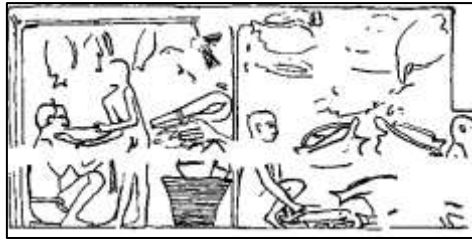


Fig. 17: The theme of the thirsty overseer in the scene of Fish market
(Source: Möhr, H.T. (1943). *The Mastaba of Hetep-her-akhti*. Study on an Ancient Tomb Chapel in the Museum of Antiquities Leiden. Mededeelingen en Verhandelingen No. 5. Leiden. 60, Fig. 30)

The theme of a standing overseer accepting a drink in a vessel

The theme of a standing overseer accepting a drink in a vessel is found once in the 5th Dynasty tomb of Hetepherakhty in the National Museum of Antiquities in Leiden (Fig.18a, b).³¹ This theme is undoubtedly an alteration of the more standard theme of an overseer accepting a drink while seated. The theme shows the overseer or the shepherd standing in the middle of a herd of browsing goats and quenching his thirst with the help of a naked boy.³² The offered drink is presented in a round vessel with a long narrow neck that has also been referred to as a flask or water bottle. It occasionally appears alongside other beverages in settings that are connected to harvest and marshlands. In fact, these large water bottles were probably common and relatively humble vessels made of clay.³³

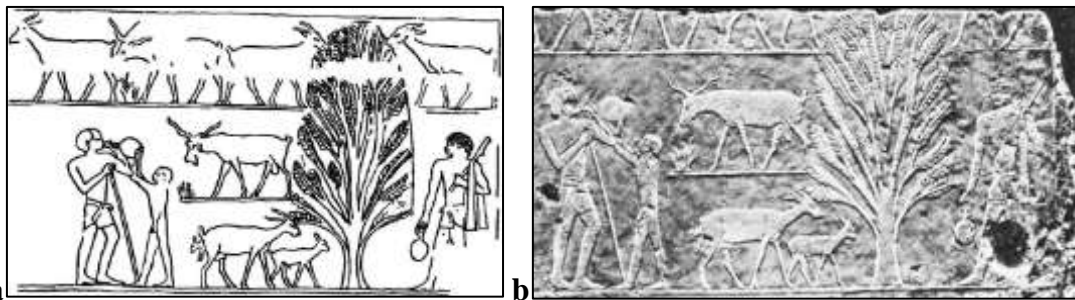


Fig. 18a, b: The theme of the standing overseer accepting a drink in the tomb of Hetepherakhty in the National Museum of Antiquities in Leiden (Source: Möhr, H.T. (1943). *The Mastaba of Hetep-her-akhti*. 51, Fig. 21; Wreszinski, W. (1923). *Atlas zur altägyptischen Kulturgeschichte*. Teil I. J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung. Leipzig. Tafel. 108)

The theme of the thirsty harvester drinking from a vessel in the context of Agricultural scenes

Harvest scenes in ancient Egypt may be accompanied by an occasional theme of a thirsty worker drinking from a vessel. In the ancient Egyptian language the term "be thirsty" means

3b , the term "thirsty peasant or man" means *ibi* , and the verb

"drink" means *swri* . In literature:

Iw ikn mw ^chm.f ibt "a scoop of water"



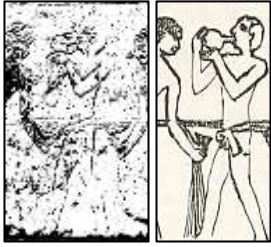

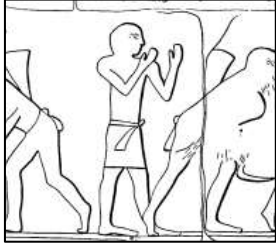
³¹ Beek, N. van de. (2017). To kill a songbird: Scenes of catching songbirds in Old Kingdom elite tombs. *Saqqara Newsletter* 15, 55-67, Fig. 1.

³² Möhr, H.T. (1943). *The Mastaba of Hetep-her-akhti*. Study on an Ancient Tomb Chapel in the Museum of Antiquities Leiden. Mededeelingen en Verhandelingen No. 5. Leiden. 51, Fig. 21; Montet, P. (1925). *Les Scènes de la vie privée dans les tombeaux égyptiens de l'ancien Empire*. Strasbourg. p. 87, Fig. 59.

³³ Harpur, Y. M. (2011). *Earthenware vessels in Old Kingdom two-dimensional art*. 449.




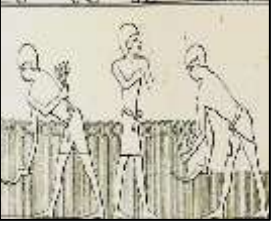


quenches thirst".³⁴ The ancient Egyptian sign for a calf or goat was used as a main determinative in the word thirst, as these animals are traditionally associated with thirst, they eat so much dry grass that they must often feel thirsty, and thus they have been used as a symbol of being thirsty.³⁵

The following table displays a number of examples for the theme of the thirsty harvester in the ancient Egyptian and Graeco-Roman harvest scenes:

Fig. No.	Scene detail:	Tomb Name	Tomb No.	Site/ Dynasty	Main References
19		Khafreankh	75	Giza 4 th Dynasty	Lepsius, C. R. (1898). <i>Denkmäler aus Aegypten und Aethiopien. Text. Zweiter Band.</i> J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung. Leipzig. 9, Lower.
20		Niankhkhnum and Khnumhotep		Saqqara 5 th Dynasty	Harpur, Y. M. (2011). <i>Earthenware vessels in Old Kingdom two-dimensional art.</i> 467, pl. 5.
21		Hetepherakhti	D 60	Saqqara 5 th Dynasty now in Leiden Inv. No. 1904/3	Möhr, H.T. (1943). <i>The Mastaba of Hetep-her-akhti.</i> p. 81, Fig 47, Pl. IV; Wreszinski, W. (1923). <i>Atlas zur altägyptischen Kulturgeschichte.</i> Teil I. J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung. Leipzig. Tafel. 98a.
22		Neferirtenef	D 55	Saqqara 5 th Dynasty	Siebels, R. (2000). <i>Agricultural Scenes.</i> in L. Donovan, & K. McCorquodale (Eds.), <i>Egyptian Art. Principles and Themes in Wall Scenes.</i> Prism. Egipto. P. 67, Fig. 7.5.
23		Nimaetre	2097	Giza 5 th Dynasty	Hassan, S. (1936). <i>Excavations at Giza 1930-1931.</i> Volume II. Cairo: The Faculty of Arts of the Egyptian University. P. 221, Fig. 240.

³⁴Gardiner, A. (1946). The Instruction Addressed to Kagemni and his Brethren. *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 32: 71–74, Pl. XIV, line 5.

³⁵[Rashwan](#), H. (2020). Arabic Jinās is not Pun, Wortspiel, Calembour, or Paronomasia: A Post-Eurocentric Approach to the Conceptual Untranslatability of Literary Terms in Arabic and Ancient Egyptian Cultures. *Rhetorica: A Journal of the History of Rhetoric.* 38 (4). 360.

24		Werirmi	25	Sheikh Said 5 th Dynasty	Wreszinski, W. (1936). <i>Atlas zur altägyptischen Kulturgeschichte</i> . Teil III. Gräber des Alten Reiches. Leipzig. Taf. 53a.
25		Niankhnesut		Saqqara 6 th Dynasty	Wreszinski, W. (1936). <i>Atlas zur altägyptischen Kulturgeschichte</i> . Teil III. Gräber des Alten Reiches. Leipzig. 111, Taf. 54; Sharawi, G. and Harpur, Y. (1988). The identity and positions of relief fragments from museums and private collections. Reliefs from various tombs at Saqqara. <i>JEA</i> 74. pp. 59-61, fig. 2 = Scene One.
26		Khnumenti	2374	Giza 6 th Dynasty	Brovarski, E. (2001). <i>The Senedjemib Complex</i> . Part I. The Mastabas of Senedjemib Inti (G 2370), Khnumenti (G 2374) and Senedjemib Mehi (G 2378). Giza Mastabas. Volume 7. Art of the Ancient World. Museum of Fine Arts. Boston. Pl. 88 [b], Fig. 88.
27		Khunes	2	Zawyet el-Maiyetin 6 th Dynasty	Lepsius, C. R. (1898). <i>Denkmäler aus Aegypten und Aethiopen</i> . Text. Zweiter Band. J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung. Leipzig. 106 [b].
28		Djau	12	Deir el-Gebrawi 6 th Dynasty	Davies, N. de G. (1902b). <i>The Rock Tombs of Deir el-Gebrawi</i> . Part II. Tomb of Zau and Tombs of the Northern Group. Egypt Exploration Fund Archaeological Survey of Egypt. Twelfth Memoir. London. P. 7, Pl. VI.
29		Ibi	8	Deir el-Gebrawi 6 th Dynasty	Davies, N. de G. (1902a). <i>The Rock Tombs of Deir el-Gebrawi</i> . Part I. Tomb of Aba and Smaller Tombs of the Southern Group. Egypt Exploration Fund Archaeological Survey of Egypt. Eleventh Memoir. London. P.18. Pl. XII = Scene One.


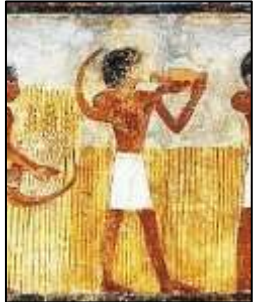




30		Menna	69	Thebes 18 th Dynasty	Davies, N. M., & Gardiner, A. H. (1936). <i>Ancient Egyptian Paintings Selected, Copied, and Described</i> . Volume I. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Pl. L; Wreszinski, W. (1923). <i>Atlas zur altägyptischen Kulturgeschichte</i> . Teil I. J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung. Leipzig. Tafel 233.
31		Unsu	N 1431 Louvre Museum	Thebes 18 th Dynasty	https://www.agefotostock.com/age/en/details-photo/egyptian-civilization-new-kingdom-dynasty-xviii-scene-of-sowing-and-harvesting-wall-painting-from-the-tomb-of-unsu-at-west-thebes/DAE-97027244 Paris, Musée Du Louvre, last accessed on 17 April 2024, 12:10 AM.
32		name unknown	143	Thebes 18 th Dynasty	Wreszinski, W. (1923). <i>Atlas zur altägyptischen Kulturgeschichte</i> . Teil I. J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung. Leipzig. Tafel 83 (a-b).
33		Tetaky	15	Thebes 18 th Dynasty	Davies, N. de G. (1925). The Tomb of Tetaky at Thebes (No. 15). <i>The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology</i> . Vol. 11, No. 1/2. pp. 10-18. Pl. IV.
34		Paheri	3	El Kab 18 th Dynasty	https://www.osirisnet.net/popupImage.php?img=/tombes/el_kab/pahery/photo/pahery_ag_878_detail_01.jpg&lang=en&sw=1280&sh=1024 last accessed on 18 April 2024, 3:10 AM.; Taylor, J. J., & Griffith, L. L. (1894). <i>the Tomb of Paheri at El Kab</i> . London. Pl. III.
35		Petosiris		Tuna el Gabal in Minia Governorate, Graeco- Roman period	Photographed by the Researcher

Table 3: Displaying examples for the theme of the thirsty harvester in the ancient Egyptian and Graeco-Roman harvest scenes (Source: Designed by the Researcher)

According to the previous table, the majority of the examples for theme of thirsty harvester is found in the Old Kingdom tombs at Saqqara and Giza that date from the mid-5th Dynasty to the late 6th Dynasty. It is most likely that the other few provincial examples for the theme, at Sheikh Said, Deir el-Gebrawi, Zawyet el-Maiyetin, Thebes, and El Kab, were copied from the earlier Memphite prototypes.³⁶

In most of the ancient Egyptian and Graeco-Roman themes the harvester is a grain harvester, and rarely a flax harvester. He is usually depicted with a full cropped hair in all the themes except for the four themes; the three Old Kingdom themes of Niankhkhnum and Khnumhotep, Hetepherakhti, and Niankhnesut (Figs. 20, 21, 25), and the Graeco-Roman theme of Petosiris (Fig. 35) that represent the cropped hair with a bald front and wide forehead.

The thirsty harvester appeared in the ancient Egyptian themes wearing a short kilt (Figs.19, 23, 26 to 29, 31 to 34), or three-strip loincloth (Figs. 21, 24), or nude with a wide apron tied around the chest from behind (Fig. 20).³⁷ The cloth of the thirsty harvester in the Graeco-Roman theme of Petosiris (Fig. 35) is completely different from the Egyptian one. It is innovative and unique in its style, a Light sleeveless chiton dress that reaches the knees and tied at the waist.³⁸

All the displayed themes in Table 3 show the thirsty harvester putting his sickle under his arm and directing it at the back whilst drinking from a water vessel,³⁹ except for the sickle in the 5th Dynasty theme of Niankhkhnum and Khnumhotep, where it is directed at the front (Fig. 20).⁴⁰ The sickle in the Graeco-Roman theme of Petosiris (Fig. 35) differs in the shape of the handle and the degree of curving.

The vessel held to the mouth is usually a long, beer-jar-like container with a short neck and a semi-oval body. The themes in the Old Kingdom tombs of Hetepherakhti (Fig.21), and Niankhnesut (Fig. 25), and the Graeco-Roman tomb of Petosiris (Fig. 35) present a different shape of vessel that is the round vessel with a long narrow neck found in the pasture scenes (see Figs.2, 18).

The bowls and vessels used by workers in the various outdoor occupations like pasture and agricultural pursuits, had to be relatively light, strong, and easy to replace. Thus, for practical reasons, clay was the perfect material for manufacturing them. They are usually shown in the hands of outdoor workers and are sometimes included in the refreshments of the workers. A water vessel might occasionally be tied to the end of a stick for easy carrying or hung by a rope from the branch of a shady tree for keeping the liquid inside cool (see Fig.1).⁴¹

The thirsty harvester, in all the ancient Egyptian and Graeco- Roman displayed themes in Table 3, is usually represented standing in profile, facing right or left and raising both hands up, holding a water vessel, placing one hand under the base of the vessel and the other hand on its body from above, near the spout. His head is either upright or slightly bent back.

³⁶ Harpur, Y. M. (2011). *Earthenware vessels in Old Kingdom two-dimensional art*. 453.

³⁷ Harpur, Y. M. (2011). *Earthenware vessels in Old Kingdom two-dimensional art*. 467, pl. 5.

³⁸ Sales, J. D. C. (2016). The Decoration of the Pronaos of Petosiris' Tomb Themes, Scenes, Styles and Techniques, *Trabajos de Egiptología Papers on Ancient Egypt. TdE* 7. 179-201.

³⁹ Davies, N. M., & Gardiner, A. H. (1936). *Ancient Egyptian Paintings Selected, Copied, and Described*. Volume III. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. P.100.

⁴⁰ Harpur, Y. M. (2011). *Earthenware vessels in Old Kingdom two-dimensional art*. 467, Pl. 5.

⁴¹ Harpur, Y. M. (2011). *Earthenware vessels in Old Kingdom two-dimensional art*. 442.

Unlike the theme of the overseer receiving the drink from a young worker (see the figures in Table 2), there is no presence for the figure of the presenter of the drink in the displayed themes of the thirsty harvester in Table 3, except for two themes found in the 18th Dynasty tombs of Menna TT 69 and TT 143 at Sheikh Abd el-Qurna (Figs. 30, 32 in Table 3). The theme of Menna (Fig. 30) shows a harvester quenching his thirst from a water vessel that was probably offered to him by a woman facing him.⁴² She is represented standing, wearing a pink upper garment and a long white skirt, and holding a woven basket on her shoulder. Such shape of basket or twinned bag was used to contain grain seeds. It dates to the late Old Kingdom and early First Intermediate Period. It was usually made of palm fiber or reed.⁴³

The theme of TT 143 (Fig. 32) that is unfortunately badly damaged shows a harvester who wants to carry a bundle of flax on his shoulder, but first enjoys a drink that a woman offers him.⁴⁴

V. Conclusion

- Workers must strengthen themselves during the hard work by having refreshments like water or milk during a short break. The earliest textual reference for the word describing the act of having a short break "3b" was early mentioned in the context of agricultural scenes in the 12th Dynasty tomb of Snbi at Meir.
- The earliest depiction for the theme of a worker having a short break of work to quench his thirst dates to the 4th Dynasty and was included in the context of harvest scenes in the tomb of Khafreankh at Giza.
- The latest depiction for the theme of a worker having a short break of work to quench his thirst dates to the Graeco-Roman period and was included in the context of harvest scenes in the tomb of Petosiris at Tuna el Gabal in Minia Governorate.
- The theme of a worker having a short break of work to quench his thirst appeared in two main contexts of the ancient Egyptian and Graeco-Roman outdoor daily life scenes: the context of pasture and animal-husbandry scenes and the context of agricultural scenes. The following table denotes the concluding remarks concerning the characteristic features of the theme of a worker taking a break to have a drink in the discussed contexts:

The characteristic features of the theme	The context of pasture and animal-husbandry scenes	The context of agricultural scenes
The number and date of the discussed themes	7 (End of the Old Kingdom period, 5 th and 6 th Dynasties).	17 ((11) Old Kingdom period from the 4 th till the 6 th Dynasty, (5) New Kingdom period, 18 th Dynasty, and (1) Graeco-Roman period).
The identity of the thirsty worker	An overseer, usually an elderly man	A grain harvester
The attitude of drinking	Usually seated in a relaxed mode, either drinking or accepting an offered drink.	Standing, raising both hands up, holding a water vessel, placing one hand under the base of the vessel and the other hand on its body from above, near the spout.

⁴² Campbell, C. (1910). *Two Theban Princes, Sons of Rameses III*. London: Oliver and Lloyd. PP. 85-106.

⁴³ Bardoňová, Mgr. M. (2019). *Grain Storage in Ancient Egypt (2600-1650 BC)*. Charles University Faculty of Arts Czech Institute of Egyptology. P. 127.

⁴⁴ Wreszinski, W. (1923). *Atlas zur altägyptischen Kulturgeschichte*. Teil I. Tafel 83 (a-b).

The shape of the jar of drink	A shallow bowl with a rolled rim or round vessel with a long narrow neck.	Usually a long, beer-jar-like container with a short neck and a semi-oval body.
The type of the drink	Milk	Water
The presenter of the drink	A young worker	Not represented
The place of rest	A makeshift shelter near one or more pasture related activities, usually under the shade of a tree.	Usually in the same workplace of harvest.

- The previous table indicates that most of the occasional theme of the thirsty worker date to the Old Kingdom period and are very clear and rich in its artistic details.
- Although there is no clear depiction for the theme of the thirsty worker in the Middle Kingdom tombs, a number of Middle Kingdom pasture and animal husbandry scenes depicted the water animal skin, which was used to quench the thirst of the shepherds, hanging from a tree branch. The theme of one of the workers taking a break to refresh himself by the water of the animal skin hanging in the tree's branch appeared in a number of New Kingdom tombs in the context of agricultural stages.
- The depiction of the theme of a worker having a short break of work to quench his thirst is more numerous and continuous in the context of agricultural scenes, the harvest stage in particular, than the context of pasture and animal-husbandry scenes.
- Although there is no depiction for a thirsty working woman in the context of daily life scenes, the focus of the study, that depicts her taking a break to have a drink like a working man, she has appeared as a drink presenter in one 18th Dynasty harvest theme as a symbol of support for the man.
- Taking a break during work is one important modern concept of human rights, which emphasizes the greatness of Egyptian civilization and its heritage.

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الحصول على استراحة لتناول مشروب

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قسم الإرشاد السياحي كلية السياحة والفنادق جامعة المنيا

الملخص

اعتاد الفنان في مصر القديمة على إضافة لمسة أكثر طبيعية إلى مناظر الحياة اليومية. وظهر هذا بوضوح في مناظر الحصاد بعدة مشاهد. يمثل أحد هذه المشاهد عاملاً يأخذ استراحة لتناول مشروب. يتمحور موضوع البحث حول هذا المشهد العرضي مع التركيز على معالمه الطبيعية؛ العامل نفسه وهويته وطريقة حمله لجرة المشروب وشكل الجرة ونوع المشروب وكذلك مقدم المشروب إذا كان ممثلاً. تم تصوير هذا المشهد في عدد من المقابر المصرية القديمة وأيضاً بمقبرة بيتوزيريس بتونا الجبل بمحافظة المنيا والتي تعود إلى العصر اليوناني الروماني. يهدف البحث إلى مناقشة جميع السمات الطبيعية للمشهد والمقارنة بين المشاهد المصرية القديمة و اليونانية الرومانية بغرض التوصل الي الخصائص والاختلافات الرئيسية لكل منها. يستخدم البحث المنهج الوصفي التحليلي لنماذج المشهد التي تمت مناقشتها لتحقيق النتائج المستهدفة من الدراسة. إحدى النتائج الرئيسية هي أن مشهد حصول العامل على استراحة قصيرة من العمل لإرواء عطشه قد ظهر في سياقين رئيسيين لمناظر الحياة اليومية في مصر القديمة و العصر اليوناني الروماني.

معلومات المقالة

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