

## Funerary Processions in Egypt from the Old Kingdom till the New Kingdom

Moataz, A. Al- Mahdy<sup>1</sup>, Khaled, Sh. El-Basuny<sup>2</sup> and Mahmoud, A. Awad<sup>3</sup>

Tourism Guidance Department, Faculty of Tourism and Hotels, Suez Canal University

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### Abstract

Representation of the funeral rites on the walls of various tombs of Nobles was a common feature throughout ancient Egypt. Painted and inscribed pictorial scenes of funerary rituals appear in all periods from the Old through New Kingdoms. The purpose of the funerary rituals was to elevate the mortal to the superhuman (Hays, 2010). That funeral procession scene is complicated and represents many events including pilgrimage, crossing the river, marching to the necropolis and arriving at the tomb. The events consisted of placing the deceased in a coffin followed by a procession to the tomb. The deceased's sons, relatives, priests, dancers, and musicians joined the procession. Mourners, sons and relatives were represented with great sorrow and grief of losing the deceased. The priests and his sons were also depicted accompanying the deceased and performing libation, reading recites and perfuming the deceased with incense. The dance of Muu and Tekenu also were depicted on the walls of the tomb as a part of the funeral procession. Divinities were also represented during the procession including Osiris, Anubis and the goddess of the west (El-Shahawy, 2005). These texts and depictions about funerary rituals played an important role in defining the development of the funeral art from the Old Kingdom till the New Kingdom.

### Introduction

Funerary procession played an important role in ancient Egyptian tombs. Decoration of funerary procession was a kind of art which served one basic aim that is to create an ideal image for the deceased to eternity (Dodson and Ikram, 2008).

These scenes on tombs follow some rules in order to give the meaning in a certain way and every presentation has its own vocabulary, religious texts and depictions of rituals according to its function. The majority of funerary reliefs was found in the New Kingdom in Thebes and was represented in many paintings. Reading these scenes is not a difficult work because everything has to do with a combination of things such as the hieroglyphs, the images, and the architecture and of course the messages that they carry for both literate and illiterate viewers of the past (Paraskeva, 2012).

The funerary procession representation appears in several tombs and also in written papyrus, texts and sarcophagus. Preparation for that funeral needed to be prepared in advance expecting the tomb owner to be there at any moment. The funeral procession for the deceased was considered to be the beginning to transport him from the earthy life to the afterlife, so the funeral procession played an important role for the deceased himself and for his family (El-Shahawy, 2005).

### Methodology

This research is considered as a study to know funeral art development of Noble tombs from the Old/ Middle Kingdom to the New Kingdom. This includes knowing what kind of rituals done, the role of priests and their recites. It also shows if it follows a certain type, in how many tombs

<sup>1</sup> moataz2020@gmail.com

<sup>2</sup> khaled.albasiony@tourism.suez.edu.eg

<sup>3</sup> mahmoudawad@tourism.suez.edu.eg

specific priests and divinities appear. This study about the funeral art development provides an iconographical analysis about the rituals in which the procession takes part. It is also an attempt to create a certain methodology with the depictions of funeral procession that inserts the reader straight to the point.

#### • The funeral procession in the Old Kingdom

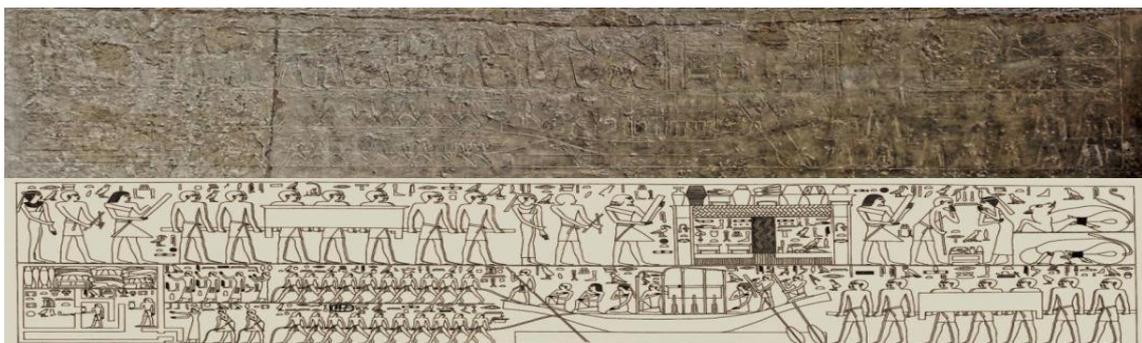
During the Old Kingdom in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> dynasties, the funeral procession scenes are found at sites of Giza, Saqqara and Deir El-madina, Dahshur, Deir El Gabrawi, El-Hawawish,...etc. These scenes have many details including participants and their actions, and the deceased furniture and his symbolic icons used in the procession (Simpson, 1976). This is obvious in nobles' tombs and mastabas of Nyankhknum and Khnumhotep of Saqqara, Qar/Meryrenefer of Giza, Idu of Giza, Hemre/Isi of Deir el-Gebrawi, Tjeti/Kaihep of El-Hawawish, Insnefruishetef of Dahshur, Mereruka of Saqqara ...etc (Kanawati, 1981).

The Mastaba of Nyankhknum and Khnumhotep of Saqqara (mid-late Dynasty Five) has on both the east and west walls of the tomb's portico depictions of funerary procession including these scenes of the transportation of shrines, which usually contain statues (Moussa and Altenmüller, 1977). The funerary procession is emphasized by the presence of Drjt -mourners and wt-priests (Fisher, 1976). The first register shows the shrines placed upon papyrus boats that are towed by canoes and men from the shore. The other register depicts the movement of the boats between two types of buildings/shrines associated in other examples with Sais and probably Buto. The coffin is dragged to the tomb on sledges by men and oxen. As shown in fig (1) (Moussa and Altenmüller, 1959).

The funerary procession also appears on the Mastaba of Qar/Meryrenefer of Giza (mid Dynasty Six) on the north wall of court C and proceeds from top to bottom. The coffin here is carried by men, followed by the usual funerary personnel. The group stops at the purification tent where a meal is prepared, where the coffin is then carried and loaded on a boat pulled by men to the embalming workshop, preceded by a group of dancers. As shown in fig (2) (Simpson, 1976). The tomb of Hemre/Isi of Deir el-Gebrawi (early-mid Dynasty Six) has a great scene from the Old Kingdom showing the transportation of the coffin in a boat appearing on the upper part of the east wall of the chapel. Animals are brought for slaughtering and young women are performing certain dances. The scene is significant in that the papyriform boat carrying the coffin is represented in front of a sailing ship that would normally tow it (Davies, 1902).



**Fig (1): The Mastaba of Nyankhknum and Khnumhotep**



**Fig (2): The tomb of Qar (G7101)**

### • The funeral procession in the Middle Kingdom

In the Middle Kingdom the funeral procession started to be more common in tombs of high officials. This due to the rights they got by the time and they were also permitted to be an Osiris in the afterlife (El-Shahawy, 2005). This is represented in the tomb of Antefoker (TT60) from the 12th dynasty, Sehotepabra and that written record of Sinuhe which is generous in details of the funeral procession. It is one of the only funerary complexes known for a woman of the Middle Kingdom, and the oldest Theban tomb and still almost intact. The Funeral procession in the tomb of Antefoker (TT60) appears on the south wall of passageway which is divided into two registers. The bottom register shows the transportation of the deceased drawn on a sledge. The other register shows the carrying of the coffin to his tomb. It is in a very bad state. It combines three scenes (one of the mummies, one of the Canopic vases and one of the Tekenu). The Funerary procession starts here on the bottom register from the left side to the right side with a catafalque on a sledge. At the side of the coffin stands a lector priest, sem priest, chamberlain, servant of the ka, Sasobek. Then, there are two sub registers. The upper one displays the dragging the sledge bearing the chest which contains the viscera and Canopic jars. The lower sub-register is of the pulling on a sledge of the "Tekenu"; the procession continues on the upper register with four groups of scenes including the coffin carried by men, porters carrying statues, the coffin dragged again and then the Muu dancers with their vaulted headgear, as shown in fig (3) (Davies, 1920).

The funerary procession and burial rites are also mentioned in that written record of Sinuhe from the 12th dynasty. The texts says, "Remember thou the day of burial, thy passing into the beatitude when the night shall be devoted to thee with oils and with bandages, the hand work of Tayt, the goddess of wearing : there is a procession to be made for the thee on the day thou art united with the earth: thy mummy case of gold with a head of lapis-lazuli a heaven above thee, the while that thou art placed upon he hearse and oxen drag thee, then shall musicians wait thy coming and the dance of mww be performed at the door of thy tomb. The words of offerings shall be pronounced on thy behalf and victim slaughtered at the door of stela" (El-Shahawy, 2005).

This funerary procession also appears in the tomb of Sehotepabra from the theban tombs from the Middle Kingdom which was found under the ruins of the Ramesseum, built by Rameses II. It also has the same funeral features found in (TT60), as shown in fig. (4) (Quibell, 1896).



Fig (3): The Tomb of Antefoker (TT60)

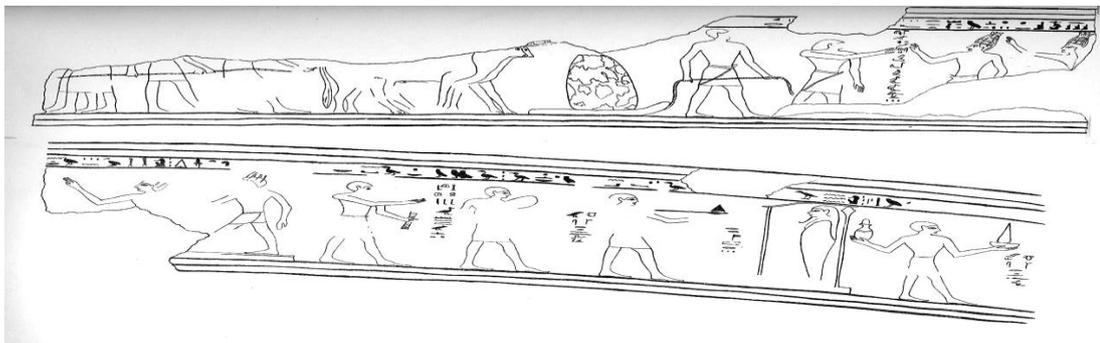


Fig (4): The Tomb of Sehotepabra

### The funeral procession in the New Kingdom

The Funeral scenes in the New Kingdom tombs witnessed the diversity and richness of the funeral scenes in the 18th and 19th dynasties. The majority of these tombs still have their intact scenes with their original colors of the funeral convoy (Muhammed, 1966a).

This is obvious in the nobles' tombs of Userhat (TT56), Menna (TT69), Kyky (TT 409), Amenemhet (TT82), Djehuty (TT45) ... etc.

The funerary procession of Userhat tomb (TT56) was depicted on the west wall (long wall, on the right) of a transverse chamber. In the upper registers is the procession of the funeral ceremony and on the bottom register, the river pilgrimage to Abydos. The top register represented the open coffin standing upright outside the tomb chapel. Lector-priest and Sem priest were depicted with offerings and traditional aromatics. Then behind the two priests are the mourners and three of them are crouching with their hands over heads. Above the procession is two registers are depicted. The First shows six men carrying on their shoulders a yoke and the other represents a pond with lotus flowers. Then there is a sledge dragged by oxen, on which the coffin of User hat rests and in front of it there is a drover with vessels of water. On the middle register, five men are pulling a smaller sledge on which there is a chest containing the Canonic jars, as shown in fig (5) (Hodel-Hoenes and Hoenes, 2000).

The tomb Djehuty (TT45) has a great depiction of funerary procession on the east wall of the transversal room. The scene starts with a chest containing the Canopic jars. This chest is made of gold plated wood and decorated with djed pillars and black "knots of Isis". The chest is placed on a barque and watched over by two goddesses: Isis and Nephtys and the representation of god Wepwawet, "the opener of the ways", can be found in the bow (front part) of the barque. Two female mourners and a young man accompany this chest. On the top, on the left-hand side, some bringing pieces of furniture and on the right side there is a group of female mourners. As shown in fig. (6) (Davies, 1948).

The tomb of Kyky (TT 409) has two registers that depict the scenes of navigation and the funeral ceremony. The first one is dedicated to the ceremonial barque. On the other part of the register there is the scene of the journey of the deceased to the tomb with the procession of four female mourners, four Canopic vases, the parade of nobles, family and friends. This register continues from the lower register of the east wall that shows the carrying of the ceremonial barque of Kyky, the group of mourners and Lector-priest and Sem-priest as shown in fig (7) (Abdul-qader, 1966).



Fig (5): The tomb of Userhat (TT56)

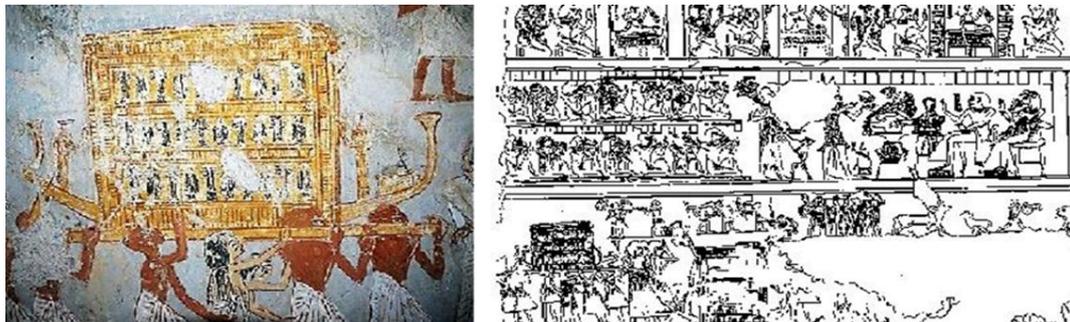


Fig (6): The tomb of Djehuty (TT45)



**Fig (6): The tomb of Kyky (TT409)**

## Results

The funerary procession scenes in the Old Kingdom were depicted on the wall of the entrance or on the wall of the pillar hall or on the wall of a specific chamber. Visits to the sacred sites had not appeared after the end of the Fifth dynasty and were instead restricted to the purification tent and embalming workshop. The two “kites” are the chief female participants in the funeral ceremonies. In later times they impersonated goddesses Isis and Nephthys. These objects taken to the tomb are generally accompanied by Drjt mourners, wt priests and lector priests. Mww dance also is depicted at various stages of the procession. The use of boats appears to be related to the transportation of the objects to the purification tent and the embalming workshop or to the visits of sacred sites such as Sais and Buto. Rare examples of transporting other funerary objects exist, such as a chest or Tekenu (Simpson, 1976).

This funeral procession in the Middle Kingdom is depicting the coffin dragged on a sledge by men and oxen, the dancers of Muu were depicted with their vaulted head. Sem priest and the Lector priest perform libation and read recites. The two goddesses, Nephthys and Isis always appear at the head (Nephthys) and at the feet (Isis). The mourners are not much like the Old Kingdom, but the number of porters increased in the procession. Richness also appears in the texts depicted on the funeral procession. Also, the funeral furniture was little in the procession. This also appears in the tomb of Sehotepabra from the Theban tombs from the middle Kingdom (Davies, 1920).

Representation of funeral rites on the walls of Theban tombs in the New Kingdom has many details and still with its intact scenes. At first it was depicted on the walls of the second chamber. From the reign of Amenophis III this tradition changed to the left wall of the first hall and this is obvious in tomb TT 181. In the Ramesside tombs, it was represented on both the left and right walls of the hall. It’s rare to find it on the walls of the second chamber. In the New Kingdom the development included increase of the variety of burial furniture, the ceremony of Tekenu, Muu dancers. The funerary scene also was rich in text and more details. Funerary scenes included major divinities representing Osiris, Anubis, the goddess of the west (Abdul-Qader, 1966).

## Discussion

Examination of the evidence from the above mentioned cases indicates that scenes representing funerary procession are placed on any wall within the chapel or a multi roomed tomb. The procession progresses more frequently from the Middle Kingdom till the New Kingdom. Rare examples of transporting other funerary objects exist, such as a chest or Tekenu during the Old Kingdom but it’s more depicted in the tomb of Antefoker TT60, Userhat TT56, Djehuty TT45, Kyky TT409...etc. These Young women who are performing certain dances are called Muu dancers, their form changed from the Old Kingdom and from the Middle Kingdom they started to be with vaulted headgear of plaited reeds and their attitude with a raised leg and pointing fingers. The dance of the Muu was known since the Old Kingdom and continued till the end of the New Kingdom (Kanawati, 1981).

Conveying the funerary furniture to the tomb passes through a number of stages using different methods of transportation, especially, papyri form boats towed by sailing ships or rowing canoes, which are often helped by men pulling them from the shore, appears in the tomb of Qar. Then it was a common feature during the Middle Kingdom and New Kingdom. The use of papyri form boats appears to be related to the transportation of the objects to the purification tent and the embalming workshop or to the visits of sacred sites such as Sais Buto, Abydos. The funeral scenes of the New Kingdom have more details including furniture, oxen and men dragging the sledge that contains the coffin. Beside those previous details, priests were depicted with libation and a great number of servants and porters in the procession. In front of the deceased shrine the major divinities are represented standing. This is clear and obvious on the walls of tomb TT 45 (Muhammed, 1966b).

### Conclusion

The funeral procession scenes follow some rules in order to give the meaning in a certain way and every presentation has its own vocabulary, religious texts and depictions of rituals according to its function. These scenes have generosity and diversity in details from the Old Kingdom till the New Kingdom. These differences in funeral activities, ceremonies and acts of mourning throughout different dynasties are depicting that mixture of religious ideas and symbolic representation.

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### المواكب الجنائزية في مصر من الدولة القديمة إلى الدولة الحديثة

معتز المهدي خالد شوقي البسيوني محمود عبدالرازق عوض

قسم الإرشاد السياحي، كلية السياحة والفنادق، جامعة قناة السويس

#### المُلخَص

يعد تمثيل الطقوس الجنائزية على جدران المقابر المتنوعة للنبلاء سمة شائعة في خلال جميع الفترات في مصر القديمة، حيث تظهر المشاهد المصوّرة والمرسومة للطقوس الجنائزية في جميع الفترات من الدولة القديمة إلى الدولة الحديثة. كان الغرض من الطقوس الجنائزية هو رفع المتوفي إلى إنسان خارق. هذا وتعد مشاهد الجنازة معقدة وتمثل العديد من الأحداث من رحلة الحج، عبور النهر، والمسيرة إلى المقبرة وصولاً إلى المقبرة. كما تضمنت هذه الأحداث وضع المتوفي في التابوت والتوجه بالموكب إلى المقبرة، فضلاً عن انضمام أقارب المتوفي والكهنة والراقصين والموسيقيين إلى الموكب. وقد تم تمثيل النائحات والأقارب بمظاهر الحزن الشديد والآسى لفقدان المتوفي. وقد تم أيضاً تصوير الكهنة المرافقين للموكب بأدائهم لطقوس التطهير وقراءة العوذ وتبخير المتوفي بالعطور والبخور. هذا فضلاً عن تصوير رقصة "الموو" وطقس "التكنو" على جدران المقبرة كجزء من الموكب الجنائزي. كما تم تصوير الآلهة خلال الموكب الجنائزي بما في ذلك أوزوريس وأنوبيس وآلهة الغرب. تلك النصوص والمناظر عن الطقوس الجنائزية قد أمدتنا بمعلومات لعبت دوراً مهماً في التعرف على التقدم الذي تم في الفن الجنائزي من الدولة القديمة وحتى الدولة الحديثة.

#### معلومات المقالة

#### الكلمات المفتاحية

المواكب الجنائزية؛  
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