

CHAPTER 2

Between Thebes and Elephantine: Busy Lives of Egyptian Officials

Julia Budka

Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna

Abstract

تنقل المسؤولين أمر معروف في مصر القديمة ويُعتقد أنه واحد من أهم العوامل التي ساهمت في تبادل العبادات المحلية ونقل المعبودات من مكان إلى آخر. ويتضح من النقوش الصخرية في إقليم أسوان، أن الأشخاص المرتبطين بالأنشطة المعمارية وكذلك المشرفين على أعمال التحجير كان يتم إرسالهم بانتظام لأنحاء متفرقة من البلاد. وتقدم الورقة البحثية عضادات أبواب منقوشة من الفتين كشواهد مباشرة على أن المسؤولين المصريين كانت لهم إقامات قصيرة المدى أثناء عصر الدولة الحديثة.

وتسمح دراسة حالة لمسئول من عصر الرعامسة أتى من طيبة وكان له أيضاً منزلاً في الفتين بمناقشة بعض مظاهر تنقل الموظفين الإداريين وكيف تقبلوا حياة التنقل هذه. حوري وزوجته قدما أنفسهما كزوج طيبي مكث بعض الوقت في الفتين وكانا يطمنان العودة إلى موطنهما وإلى حماية معبوداتهما الطيبة. عضادات الأبواب كالحصاة بحوري يوجد لها نظائر في مواقع أخرى من مصر وتعكس - مثل النصوص التي تُمجّد طيبة على أوستراكا أو بردي - اتجاه عصر الرعامسة لإعطاء أولوية قصوى لموطن الفرد ومعبوداته المحلية. ومن المقترح رؤية هذا التفضيل المتزايد لطيبة في حقبة الرعامسة كنتيجة مباشرة لنمط الحياة المزدهم للمسؤولين والذين يرجح أن تنقلاتهم كانت أكثر مما نستطيع أن نجزم به نظراً للمحدودية لمصادرنا. حوري ذلك المسئول الطيبي وخدمته قصيرة المدى في الفتين ليست مثلاً نادراً لكنها غالباً إنعكاس لمظهر عام للإدارة في عصر الدولة الحديثة خبره عدد كبير من الناس.

My first encounter with Mohamed el-Bialy was in 2002, during his time as the Director General of the West Bank, on the occasion of my initial campaign working on material from Austrian excavations in the Asasif. Later, we regularly met in Aswan where I was studying the ceramics from the New Kingdom settlement of Elephantine. Most recently, our paths crossed again at Thebes: Mohamed helped a lot with the organisation of the conference "Thebes in the First Millennium BC", held 2012 in Luxor.

It is my personal pleasure and a great honour to participate in a Festschrift for Mohamed. Given our encounters, it seemed logical to present him a small account referring both to Thebes and Aswan, highlighting the strong links between these sites and aiming to illustrate some aspects of the complex Pharaonic administration and the busy lives of its protagonists.

Mobility of High Officials in the New Kingdom

Various monuments illustrate that mobility of administrative staff and officials is not a modern phenomenon, but was also common in Pharaonic Egypt. There are cases where we know some details about families and their origins and the data allows reconstructing their careers for several generations, often with changing residences.¹ Titles and references to specific deities are in general good indications to separate between long-time residents and newcomers of Egyptian sites. Gods addressed on stelae and other objects are primarily local deities, but also gods associated with other places than the find spot of the monument are attested, possibly hinting at the donor's hometown or short-term residence.² Mobility of people is therefore thought to be one of the major factors for the exchange of local cults in Egypt—for example, references to the god Khnum at Thebes or to the goddess Meretseger at Elephantine seem to be related to either the origins or to temporary stopovers of the donors.³

- 1 E.g. Labib Habachi, "A Family from Armant in Aswân and in Thebes," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 51 (1965): 123–136.
- 2 Julia Budka, *Der König an der Haustür, Die Rolle des ägyptischen Herrschers an dekorierten Türgewänden von Beamten im Neuen Reich* (Vienna: Afro-Pub, 2001), 62; Ingrid Nebe, "V. Die Stelen des Heiligtums Y," in Werner Kaiser et al., "Stadt und Tempel von Elephantine, 17./18. Grabungsbericht," *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo* 46 (1990): 231; Wilhelm Spiegelberg, "Ein Heiligtum des Gottes Chnum von Elephantine in der thebanischen Totenstadt," *Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde* 54 (1918): 65–67; Dominique Valbelle, *Satis et Anoukis* (Mainz am Rhein: Philipp von Zabern, 1981), 126.
- 3 Martin Bommas, "Ramessidische Graffiti aus Elephantine," *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo* 51 (1995): 3–5.

Based on the rich written record coming from Deir el-Medine it is reasonable to assume that the inhabitants of this New Kingdom workmen village were also sent to other sites in Egypt, possibly connected with their skills in art work.⁴ A comparable mobility of other professions from less well attested towns cannot be excluded. This is evident for people involved in expeditions and in the organisation of transporting goods or materials. For example, the large corpus of names and titles attested by the rock inscriptions of the First Cataract area and especially on Sehel Island comprises most of the Theban high officials of the New Kingdom, but also some Memphite officials. These officials were engaged in building activities and primarily the supervision of stone work in the Aswan region.⁵ Furthermore, there is evidence from settlement sites that officials had temporary living quarters in different parts of Egypt during the New Kingdom.⁶ Similarly, officials were sent into regions outside of Egypt proper, but under Egyptian administration,⁷ especially in the then newly founded towns in Nubia (e.g. Aniba, Amara West and Sai Island among others). It is particularly the New Kingdom with its wealth of available material when it is possibly to trace officials at more than one site thanks to textual records. Famous examples are various King's Sons of Kush like Nehi (Thutmose III)⁸ and Setau (Ramesses II).⁹ As the highest officials of the Egyptian administration in Nubia, they have left marks at Thebes, in the region of Aswan and also in Lower and Upper Nubia. The most common monuments are—besides a tomb ideally situated at Thebes—rock inscriptions, rock shrines, stelae and

4 See Valbelle, *Satis et Anoukis*, 126. Cf. also Nebe, "V. Stelen," 231.

5 Cf. Bommas, "Ramessidische Graffiti," 5; Labib Habachi, "Two Graffiti from the Reign of Queen Hatshepsut," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 16 (1957): 89–92; Thomas Hikade, *Das Expeditionswesen im ägyptischen Neuen Reich* (Heidelberg: Heidelberger Orientverlag, 2001), 235–238.

6 See e.g. Budka, *König Haustür*, 107.

7 Cf. Carola Vogel, "Pharaos verlängerter Arm: ägyptische Beamte im Auslandseinsatz," in *Die Männer hinter dem König: 6. Symposium zur ägyptischen Königsideologie/6th Symposium on Egyptian Royal Ideology Iphofen, 16.–18. Juli 2010*, ed. Horst Beinlich, *Königtum, Staat und Gesellschaft früher Hochkulturen* 4,3 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2012), 151–166.

8 See most recently Christian Leblanc, "Nehy, prince et premiere rapporteur du roi," in *Verba manent, Recueil d'études dédiées à Dimitri Meeks par ses collègues et amis*, ed. Isabelle Regén and Frédéric Servajan (Montpellier: Inst. d'Égyptologie François Daumas, 2009), 241–251.

9 Cf. Christine Raedler, "Zur Repräsentation und Verwirklichung pharaonischer Macht in Nubien: Der Vizekönig Setau," in *Das Königtum der Ramessidenzeit. Voraussetzungen—Verwirklichung—Vermächtnis. Akten des 3. Symposiums zur Ägyptischen Königsideologie in Bonn 7.–9. 6. 2001*, ed. Rolf Gundlach and Ursula Rössler-Köhler, *Beiträge zur altägyptischen Königsideologie* 3, *Ägypten und Altes Testament* 36,3 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2003), 129–137.

statues.¹⁰ Such monuments have already been taken into account by scholars to establish prosopographies, to reconstruct administrative systems and to trace economic aspects of New Kingdom Egypt.¹¹

In the following, I will focus on less well-known monuments which are first-hand testimonies for a life on the move and originate from the period in which the respective officials actively held their office: inscribed door lintels and door jambs of houses which functioned as dwellings and in most cases just as short-term homes. The settlement of Elephantine has yielded a number of interesting stone blocks which testify the presence of officials who are also known from other sites, thus were sent for a certain period to Elephantine.

Theban Officials as Temporary Residents of Elephantine

The importance of Elephantine as site with strategic value due to its location just north of the First Nile Cataract is well known.¹² For a long period Elephantine functioned as base for expeditions to Sudan and as important trading point at Egypt's southern border.¹³ With the Egyptian expansion towards the South during the New Kingdom, coinciding with an increased demand for the transport of goods, materials and people to and from Upper and Lower Nubia, Elephantine flourished and gained importance. The Theban priesthood was undeniably interested in the local temples at Elephantine, as

10 The "Besucherinschriften" or visitors' graffiti, very common in the New Kingdom, fall into another category, see Hana Navrátilová, *The Visitors' Graffiti of Dynasties XVIII and XIX in Abusir and Northern Saqqara* (Prague: Set Out, 2007), *passim*.

11 See e.g. Pierre-Marie Chevereau, *Prosopographie des cadres militaires égyptiens du Nouvel Empire* (Antony: Chevereau, 1994); Ingeborg Müller, *Die Verwaltung Nubiens im Neuen Reich* (PhD diss., Humboldt University Berlin, 1979) and Ingeborg Müller, *Die Verwaltung Nubiens im Neuen Reich, Meroitica 18* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2013). Cf. also Raedler, "Repräsentation," 129–137 for a reconstruction of the "network" of one single person, in this case the King's Son of Kush Setau.

12 Cf. Detlef Franke, "Elephantine," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt*, ed. Donald B. Redford, Vol. 1 (Oxford: University Press, 2001), 465; Werner Kaiser, "Elephantine," in *Encyclopedia of the Archaeology of Ancient Egypt*, ed. Kathryn A. Bard (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), 335–342.

13 Cf. Hikade, *Expeditionswesen*, *passim*; Cornelius von Pilgrim, "Elephantine—(Festungs-) Stadt am Ersten Katarakt," in *Cities and Urbanism in Ancient Egypt*, eds. Manfred Bietak, Ernst Cerny and Irene Forstner-Müller (Vienna: Austrian Academy of Sciences Press, 2010), 257–265.

can be shown by a number of rock graffiti¹⁴ and assumed by material remains like ceramic vessels.¹⁵

Egyptian officials who participated in expedition and/or military campaigns towards the South had to pass through Aswan and Elephantine. Obviously they spent some time there before their departure to Nubia as hundreds of rock inscriptions attest.¹⁶ References on door jambs testify the existence of temporary dwellings for King's Sons of Kush like Nehi on the island of Elephantine.¹⁷ Also priests of gods at other sites had short-term houses on Elephantine, as can be shown by the lintel of Huj, superior of the priests of all gods at Elkab during the reign of Ramesses III.¹⁸

The Case of Hori, Overseer of the Seal and Superior of the Scribes of the Offering Tables

During the 32nd season of the joint mission of the German Archaeological Institute Cairo and the Swiss Institute Cairo at Elephantine, a left door jamb was discovered *in situ* in a secondary position in house X in area B 11.¹⁹ The door jamb was reused as a step tread in a later building phase and was broken for this purpose into two pieces (Fig. 2.1).²⁰

- 14 Stephan J. Seidlmayer, "New Rock Inscriptions on Elephantine Island," in *Egyptology at the Dawn of the Twenty-first Century, Proceedings of the Eighth International Congress of Egyptologists Cairo 2000*, ed. Zahi Hawass, Vol. 1 (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2003), 441–442.
- 15 Julia Budka, "Weihgefäße und Festkeramik des Neuen Reiches von Elephantine," in Günter Dreyer et al., "Stadt und Tempel von Elephantine. 33./34./35. Grabungsbericht," *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo* 64 (2008): 119.
- 16 See especially Labib Habachi, "The Graffiti and Work of the Viceroy of Kush in the Region of Aswan," *Kush* 5 (1957): 13–36; Alexander J. Peden, *The Graffiti of Pharaonic Egypt. Scope and Roles of Informal Writings (c. 3100–332 BC)* (Leiden/Boston/Köln: Brill, 2001), 83 with note 132; Annie Gasse and Vincent Rondot, *Les inscriptions de Séhel* (Cairo: Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 2007); Seidlmayer, "Rock Inscriptions," 440–447.
- 17 Budka, *König Haustür*, 69; 107, cat. 1.
- 18 Budka, *König Haustür*, 168–169, cat. 111, fig. 3, pl. 1.
- 19 My sincere thanks go to Cornelius von Pilgrim as the director of the Swiss Institute and to Beatrice von Pilgrim as the excavator of house X for their support and for the permission to publish the door jamb of Hori.
- 20 Julia Budka and Beatrice von Pilgrim, "V. Bauteile des Wohnsitzes einer thebanischen Beamtenfamilie in Elephantine," in Günter Dreyer et al., "Stadt und Tempel von Elephantine. 33./34./35. Grabungsbericht," *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo* 64 (2008): 89.

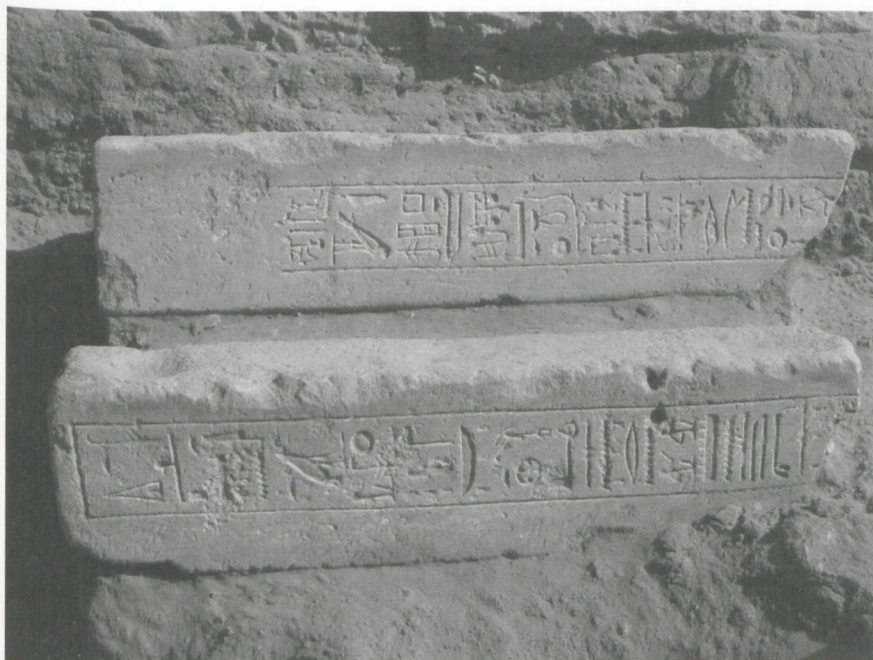


FIGURE 2.1 The two blocks of Hori's door jamb (36605A/e-1, 36605A/a-1) in their secondary in situ position in house X (area B II).

The text of the door jamb (Fig. 2.2) reads as follows:²¹

→ *ḥtp dj nswt Jmn Mw.t Ḥnsw ntr.w nb.w W3s.t dj=sn rn=j mnw m-b3ḥ=sn
jb=j ḥntš n m33 ḥ3.wt=sn n k3 n jmj-r3 ḥtm ḥrj sš.w wdḥw m ḥw.t-nswt Ḥrj m3c
ḥrw n W3s.t*

The offering which the king gives to Amun, Mut and Khons, to all gods of Thebes, may they grant that my name will last in their presence, that my heart rejoices because of seeing their faces; for the ka of the overseer of the seal, superior of the scribes of the offering table in the king's temple (ḥw.t-nswt) of Thebes, Hori, the justified.

The owner of the house to which this door jamb originally belonged is named as a certain Hori. Luckily, thanks to his titles, we can identify him with the possessor of another monument: the seated double statue of Hori and his

21 Budka and von Pilgrim, "V. Bauteile," 90–92.



FIGURE 2.2 Hieroglyphic inscription on Hori's door jamb.

wife made of Aswan red granite and now kept in the Louvre, Paris (A 68).²² On this statue, Hori holds the following titles: *overseer of the seal*²³ and *superior of the scribes of the offering tables in the House of Millions of years of king B3-n-R^c mry-Jmn in the realm of Amun in Western Thebes*. The text on the Louvre statue allows therefore to interpret the somehow diffuse term *ḥwt-nswt* on the Elephantine door jamb: it is nothing else than the abbreviation for *ḥwt-nswt n.t ḥḥ.w n rnp.wt* + (King's name), in this case for *ḥwt n.t ḥḥ.w rnp.wt nswt-bjt (B3-n-R^c mry-Jmn) m pr Jmn ḥr jmnt.t W3.s.t*,²⁴ the House of Millions of years of king Merenptah in Western Thebes.²⁵ Hori's door jamb therefore supports Ullmann's modern translation of Houses of Millions of years as "Königstempel",²⁶ as buildings with a strong functional connection to the Royal ka and to the king as legitimate ruler for eternity.²⁷

As Hori is connected with the cult of a temple founded by Merenptah, it is reasonable to date his lifetime to the 19th Dynasty. The House of Millions of years of Merenptah was completed after year 5 of the king, but there is evidence for a long period of changes and modification within the complex.²⁸

22 Wilfried Seipel, *Gott-Mensch-Pharao. Viertausend Jahre Menschenbild in der Skulptur des Alten Ägypten*, Ausstellungskatalog des Kunsthistorischen Museums im Künstlerhaus (Vienna: Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien, 1992), 350–351, cat. 139; Martina Ullmann, *König für die Ewigkeit—Die Häuser von Millionen von Jahren, Ägypten und Altes Testament* 51 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2002), 399–400, 2.1.1.

23 This title was translated in various ways (see Budka and von Pilgrim, "V. Bauteile," 92); I follow K.A. Kitchen's *superintendent of the seal* (Kenneth A. Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions. Volume IV. Translated and Annotated Translations: Merenptah and the Late Nineteenth Dynasty* (Oxford et al.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2003), 103); see also Abdul R. Al-Ayedi, *Index of Egyptian Administrative, Religious and Military Titles of the New Kingdom* (Ismailia: Obelisk Publ., 2006), 109, no. 359; Seipel, *Gott-Mensch-Pharao*, 350, cat. 139.

24 See Ullmann, *König Ewigkeit*, 399.

25 For this temple see Horst Jaritz, "The Mortuary Temple of Merenptah at Qurna and its building phases," in *Egyptology at the Dawn of the Twenty-first Century, Proceedings of the Eighth International Congress of Egyptologists Cairo 2000*, ed. Zahi Hawass, Vol. 1 (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2003), 234–241; Stephanie Schröder, *Millionenjahrhaus. Zur Konzeption des Raumes der Ewigkeit im konstellativen Königtum in Sprache, Architektur und Theologie* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2010), 107; Ullmann, *König Ewigkeit*, 399–408.

26 Ullmann, *König Ewigkeit*, 672. For further relevance of this mentioning of *ḥwt-nswt* see Budka and von Pilgrim, "V. Bauteile," 96–97.

27 For a functional interpretation of the Theban Houses of Millions of years see most recently Schröder, *Millionenjahrhaus*, 217–229 and *passim*.

28 Jaritz, "Mortuary Temple Merenptah," 234.

A dating to the 19th Dynasty corresponds to both the epigraphic features of the door jamb and to the iconography of the Louvre statue.

Thanks to the Louvre statue, which was most likely cut in Aswan although its find spot is unrecorded, we have also some information about Hori's family. His father Amuneminet (*Jmn-m-jn.t*) was *sab* and scribe of the town/nome; his wife, the *šmꜣj.t n Jmn* Nofret-irj (*Nfr.t-jrj*), is also attested at Elephantine.²⁹ In the 16th German-Swiss excavation campaign the lower part of a door jamb with the name of Nofret-irj was recovered in a secondary position, reused as a threshold in house 40 of level 7. Because of the shape and measurements of this block, it is definitely not the counterpart to Hori's jamb, but rather a fragment of another door frame within the house of Hori. It is tempting to reconstruct an area within the house which was primarily used by women and framed by such a door mentioning the mistress of the house.³⁰ Of course the real presence of Nofret-irj at Elephantine cannot be verified, but it seems very likely that she accompanied her husband towards the South.

It is worth mentioning that together with this fragment of *Nfr.t-jrj*, another stone from a door jamb was found.³¹ Similar as the one of Hori, this upper part of a jamb refers to a specific Theban deity in the offering formula: *Khons at Thebes-Neferhotep-Thoth within the southern Heliopolis*.³² Although it cannot be proven this fragment is likely to have once been part of Hori's villa, being another example of Ramesside references to Theban deities on door jambs at Elephantine.

"Longing for One's Hometown", Praising Thebes and Its Deities

Hori and his wife Nofret-irj were represented by the texts of their door frames as a Theban couple which spent some time in Elephantine and was wishing to return to their hometown, praising the Theban triad. References to Theban deities are in general common in the area of the First Cataract and in particular

29 Budka, *König Haustür*, cat. 121, Ele/NR/Pf.7/11c (I?), fig. 47 and pl. 3c.

30 Cf. door jambs with the name of princess Meritaton in the North Palace at Amarna, see Budka, *König Haustür*, 74 with references in note 369. For the common, but not necessary separation of parts of houses into male and female compartments in more recent Nubian and Sudanese architecture see Dieter Eigner, "Kirkbeken—ein Dorf der Manasir am 4. Nilkatarakt," *Mitteilungen der Sudanarchäologischen Gesellschaft* 16 (2005): 116 with references. A division of houses according to the gender of the inhabitants might have been a possible choice in ancient Egypt as well.

31 Budka, *König Haustür*, 172, cat. 116, fig. 43, pl. 2c.

32 See Budka, *König Haustür*, 172; Budka and von Pilgrim, "V. Bauteile," 93.

well attested for rock inscriptions³³ and stelae,³⁴ but also on other door jambs.³⁵ All in all, on Ramesside door jambs from various sites in Egypt, Theban gods are frequently named.³⁶ However, as we know more about Hori's family thanks to the Louvre statue, it is clear that the Elephantine door jamb relates directly to his hometown and not just to Thebes as important town. It remains open how long Hori was away from Thebes and stationed at Elephantine. Given his titles, this business stay might have been connected with stone work,³⁷ but also with organising expeditions to Nubia or with administrative tasks relating to various Nubian resources and raw materials.³⁸ A certain Khnumemheb, employed in the domain of Amun and like Hori superior of the seal, has left a rock graffito at Sehel and was probably for similar reasons as Hori in the area of the First Cataract to do business.³⁹

Living at the border site of Egypt, it was of importance for Hori to demonstrate his Theban background and his affection to Amun on representative parts of his dwelling.⁴⁰ The phrases used on the newly discovered door jamb at Elephantine fit into the theme of the "*Sehnsucht nach der Heimatstadt*"⁴¹ which can be found in various New Kingdom contexts, primarily in upper class findings.⁴² A good example is O. Petrie 39 where one reads in the translation of Kitchen: "... *Whenever I go forth, to travel (around), (then) bring me back to your City, o Amun! For I love it, (my) love (?) is in your City,—more than (for) (mere)*

33 Seidlmayer, "Rock Inscriptions," 440–447.

34 Nebe, "V. Stelen," 224–231.

35 Budka, *König Haustür*, 63–64.

36 Budka, *König Haustür*, 61–68. Amun-Re appears frequently on stelae of Ramesside officials in all parts of the country, see Karen Exell, *Soldiers, Sailors and Sandalmakers. A Social Reading of Ramesside Period Votive Stelae* (London: Golden House Publications, 2009), 108.

37 Cf. Hikade, *Expeditionswesen*, 49–53.

38 For such tasks of a scribe of the offering table see Selke Eichler, *Die Verwaltung des "Hauses des Amun" in der 18. Dynastie* (Hamburg: Buske, 2000), 167–168.

39 See Annie Gasse and Vincent Rondot, "The Egyptian Conquest and Administration of Nubia during the New Kingdom: the testimony of the Sehel rock-inscriptions," *Sudan & Nubia* 7 (2003): 44, fig. 5.

40 Cf. Budka, *König Haustür*, 62.

41 See Jan Assmann, *Ägypten. Theologie und Frömmigkeit einer frühen Hochkultur* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1984), 30–35; Martin Bommas, "Heimweh nach Theben vor dem Hintergrund kultureller Lebensform," *Göttinger Miszellen* 193 (2003): 41–44; Heike Guksch, "Sehnsucht nach der Heimatstadt: ein ramessidisches Thema?," *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo* 50 (1994): 101–106.

42 See an early example from Aniba (Lower Nubia): Bommas, "Heimweh," 42.

bread, more than (for mere) beer, o Amun, the (very) soil of your town do I love—(far) more than the (precious) ointments of another land!”⁴³

This love for Thebes is also attested on a Ramesside ostrakon from Elephantine.⁴⁴ It was therefore not only important to get a representative burial and a tomb chapel at Thebes, but also to demonstrate loyalty to Thebes and its deities during one's lifetime.⁴⁵ Hori's wish “that my name will last in their presence” is frequently used in connection with one's hometown. According to Assmann a “good name” in the hometown is essential for a lasting memory and considered to provide existence in the hereafter.⁴⁶

The door jamb of Hori illustrates therefore the “Sitz im Leben” of Egyptian homesickness like we encounter it in literary sources and wisdom-texts.⁴⁷ Given the still very limited state of research about settlement sites, we have to assume that there were a large number of temporary residences for the busy officials of the New Kingdom. Thus, the increase in textual references to the hometown and its importance during Ramesside times might not be accidental—maybe the international period of the 19th and 20th Dynasties resulted in a complex lifetime for a lot of officials who were on the move during their office, not only to follow the court and king, but also traveling to supervise various expeditions and doing business in regions beyond the core of Egypt.⁴⁸ To spend one's remaining years in the beloved hometown would have been indeed desirable for various reasons—it became one aspect of the self-representation of a high Ramesside official. *Home sweet home* is a slogan which was of high significance in the elite society of the New Kingdom where the prosperousness of future generations depended on the funerary cult carried out by the family at

43 Kenneth A. Kitchen, “Festivity in Ramesside Thebes and Devotion to Amun and his City,” in *Egyptian Stories. A British Egyptological Tribute to Alan B. Lloyd on the Occasion of His Retirement*, eds. Thomas Schneider and Kasia Szapakowska (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2007), 150.

44 Hans-Werner Fischer-Elfert, “X. Hieratische Schriftzeugnisse,” in Günter Dreyer et al., “Stadt und Tempel von Elephantine. 28./29./30. Bericht,” *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo* 58 (2002): 217, Ω 1881.

45 Jan Assmann, “Gottesbeherzigung. ‘Persönliche Frömmigkeit’ als religiöse Strömung der Ramessidenzeit,” in *L'Impero Ramesside, Convegno internazionale in onore di Sergio Donadoni, Vicino Oriente, Quaderno* 1 (Rome: Università degli Studi di Roma “La Sapienza,” 1997), 23.

46 Assmann, *Ägypten*, 33–34.

47 Cf. Kitchen, “Festivity,” 149–153. See also Bommas, “Heimweh,” 41–44.

48 Cf. Kenneth A. Kitchen, “High society and lower ranks in Ramesside Egypt at home and abroad,” *British Museum Studies in Ancient Egypt and Sudan* 6 (2006): 31–36, accessed June 2, 2014, <http://www.thebritishmuseum.ac.uk/bmsaes/issue6/kitchen.html>.

home. *s'nh rn*, to revive one's name, is the main task of an official's son in order to incorporate the deceased into the group of the living—carried out at its best within the family at home. Hori and his short-term house on Elephantine in which he demonstrated a personal preference and priority for Theban gods correspond to this setting.

The case study discussed in this paper should not be seen as exceptional, but rather as a small glimpse into a regularly busy life style of Egyptian officials during the 2nd millennium BC, an era which may be characterized as “a cosmopolitan age”.⁴⁹ Like Hori, a number of officials probably experienced short-term contracts outside their hometown on which they could also bring their wives and families. The common attitude to these stays was to view them as just temporary, wishing to return home sooner than later. Scholars living in the fast moving 21st century AD will perhaps have little difficulties sympathizing with Hori and his fellow Egyptians of the Ramesside era, no matter how different the cultural settings are.

49 Kitchen, “High society,” 33.