It is with great privilege and honour that we present to you the seventh edition of the Undergraduate Journal of Middle East Studies. This year, our Journal celebrates ten years of excellence in writing and research in the field of Middle East studies. For this occasion, our team has taken the initiative of reviving the original format and design of the Journal which has proven to be a challenging but rewarding task. Since its inception in 2004, editors have striven to provide an academic forum for undergraduate students to engage in scholarly discussion regarding a region that is often discussed but seldom understood. As in previous issues, our authors seek to present readers with diverse perspectives upon the Middle East, echoing our Journal’s mandate: to depict a non-monolithic portrait of the region. We hope you enjoy this edition of the Journal.

Shirin Shahidi
Editor-in-Chief
2013-2014

Editor-in-Chief: Shirin Shahidi
Layout Editor: Sharon Mizbani

Editorial Board:
Simrat Pannu
Benjamin Robinson
Moska Rokay

Advisor:
Professor Timothy P. Harrison

As the official Undergraduate Journal of the Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations at the University of Toronto, we would like to extend our deepest gratitude to staff and supervisors of the Department of Middle East Studies as well as the Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations Students’ Union whose sponsorship and support has allowed the Journal to thrive throughout the years.
British Decision Making During the Suez Crisis
D. Reid Dobell

The Transformation of Political Islam in Turkey: the AK Party
Aishe Jamal

Ancient Egypt: Perspectives on Women in Male-Dominated Literature
Emily Hotton

Ending Isolation: The Ottoman Search for Security, 1908-1914
Shahryar Pasandideh

Egypt Trade Relations with Near East during the Naqada Period
Felipe Gonzalez-Macqueen

Neorealism and the Bombing of the Osirak Reactor
Carissa Beata

Egyptian Letters to the Dead
Jennifer Green
British Decision Making During the Suez Crisis

By D. Reid Dobell

In 1956, Britain shocked the world with its response to the nationalization of the Suez Canal by President Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt. Its decision to invade the Suez Canal Zone using military force in conjunction with Israel and France made little sense to international observers, many of whom strongly condemned the action. An analysis of the decision making process that played out in the higher echelons of the British Government helps explain why military action was, in fact, pursued. Using the bureaucratic policy model, first identified by Graham T. Allison in his article “Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis,” it becomes apparent how an apparently irrational action was pursued by Britain. This is proved by studying the remarkable similarity between the three pillars of Allison’s model and actual events that transpired between August and November 1956 within the British cabinet. The shortcomings of the bureaucratic policy model are also briefly discussed before several alternate theories are proposed that could better explain aspects of the British decision making process.

The British government’s response to the Suez Crisis of 1956 shocked the world. The United Kingdom, spurred on by Gamal Nasser’s nationalization of the Suez Canal, jointly invaded its former protectorate Egypt in collusion with France and Israel. It was immediately apparent that the international community strongly condemned this show of force by the three nations. The humiliation suffered by the UK as a consequence of its decision to occupy the Suez Canal has led many to question retrospectively what led the British down this ill-fated path. Considering what is now known about the Suez Crisis, the bureaucratic policy model, as discussed by Graham Allison in his 1986 article “Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis,” most adequately accounts for this decision to resort to military intervention. This paper will assess the bureaucratic policy model’s ability to explain British decision-making and briefly address various shortcomings of the model. Other analytical lenses that could compensate for the model’s deficiencies will also be briefly discussed. Consequently, the bureaucratic policy model of decision-making is the best theoretical tool in explaining the decision-making processes within the British government that led to its use of military power during the Suez Crisis.

On July 26 1956, Gamal Abdel Nasser, the president of Egypt, announced that he was nationalizing the Suez Canal Company. This company controlled shipping in the Suez Canal, through which over two-thirds of Europe’s total oil consumption passed. Nasser planned to use the revenue from the Canal Company to finance a power dam after both England and the U.S. denied Egypt loans. Many oil dependent Western powers panicked with the news of the

nationalization, fearing that Nasser could threaten their access to cheap oil. In the months following the announcement, several public attempts were made to resolve the issue diplomatically.\(^3\) Behind the scenes however, Britain’s policymakers grew increasingly troubled by the situation and a decision was made by them to collude with France and Israel in occupying the Suez Canal region by force to safeguard British interests.\(^4\) The Canal was occupied on the 5th of November 1956, and the U.S., the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and the United Nations immediately denounced the action. The decision to intervene militarily proved disastrous for Britain’s international credibility and led many to wonder why the UK had decided that exercising military force was its best option.\(^5\)

Based on what is now known about the Suez Crisis, the bureaucratic policy model of decision-making is the most useful theoretical tool in explaining why Britain resorted to military action. This model approaches decision-making analysis based on the assumption that states are non-rational, non-unitary actors. The actions of the state are considered to be the result of several individuals competing with each other for control over the political decision making process. These individuals operate within the structure of the competition and their placement in this structure determines the amount of power or influence they have over the process. Each individual is therefore limited in what they can and cannot do by the position in the structure that they occupy.\(^6\) As a result of these factors, any decision taken by a state is the product of intense political competition under a set of rules defined by the environment and competitors in the game, the result of which no one can predict. These realities lead to the three general propositions of Allison’s bureaucratic policy model: “action does not pre-suppose intention,” “where you stand depends on where you sit,” and “chiefs and Indians.”\(^7\) Allison explains the first proposition simply as that the parties involved in choosing an action may not necessarily have intended that action. The second refers to the fact that the role of an individual often determines where they stand on a given issue. The third means that there is a constant vertical struggle “to induce others to see what [an individual thinks] needs to be done.”\(^8\) The decision-making process described by this bureaucratic policy model is one that produces irrational actions that would confound a rational observer. Britain’s decision to use military force in the Suez Crisis was one such irrational action.

By applying the bureaucratic policy decision-making model to Britain, it is possible to answer why Britain decided to use force. In fact, the British decision-making process was characterized by the three propositions of this model. In the Suez Crisis, the first of these propositions that “action does not pre-suppose intention” implies that while Britain did invade Egypt, it was not its original intention to do so. This occurrence is consistent with the course of events in the British cabinet during the Crisis. The day after the nationalization of the canal, the full cabinet met and Prime Minister Anthony Eden pushed his ministers to decide the potential extent of any response to Egypt’s actions. A policy of using military power to resolve the conflict as ‘a last resort’ was adopted, even

---


\(^7\) Ibid., 711.

\(^8\) Ibid., 711.
though about half the cabinet were opposed to any use of force.\textsuperscript{9} Even the majority of those open to using force hoped it could be avoided in favor of diplomatic means.\textsuperscript{10} Despite belonging to the same party, Prime Minister Anthony Eden and Chancellor of the Exchequer, Harold Macmillan interpreted the ‘last resort’ policy differently. Macmillan and later Eden actually considered it an active invitation to explore military options throughout the Crisis, something both men pursued.\textsuperscript{11} The offices of the two men placed them in influential positions in the hierarchical structure of the bureaucratic policy model like competition occurring within the cabinet to determine British policy throughout the Crisis. This allowed them to steer the UK down a path towards using force, a path that the cabinet had accepted without careful consideration.\textsuperscript{12} As a result, Britain pursued an action that was never the intention of the majority of its policy makers. The consistency of this occurrence with the bureaucratic policy mode’s first proposition is the first step in proving the model’s usefulness in explaining England’s decision to use force.

The establishment of an Egypt Committee within the British cabinet conforms to another of the bureaucratic policy model’s propositions, ‘Chiefs and Indians’. Prime Minister Eden immediately created an Egypt Committee tasked with managing the crisis when news of the nationalization reached England. The men on this committee formed the nucleus of those competing in the decision-making process. The creation of the Committee structured the policymaking competition so that Committee members became the ‘chiefs’ and had a disproportionate influence on the decision-making process. The remainder of the cabinet ministers who found themselves outside the committee became the ‘Indians’ because while they were free to contribute opinions in cabinet meetings, the structure of the bureaucratic process rendered them unable to impress their point of view on the members of the Egypt Committee where the real decision-making took place.\textsuperscript{13} Secretary of the Commonwealth Earl Home supported this view by observing that “those outside the cabinet [became] distanced from the crisis.”\textsuperscript{14} This structure helps explain how Britain might have been pulled in the direction of using force. The competitors who disagreed with the Egypt Committee were simply sidelined from the decision-making process. ‘Indians’ or ministers outside the Egypt Committee like Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Anthony Nutting strenuously tried to re-enter the competition and steer British policy away from force, but the structure of the bureaucratic process made it impossible to do so.\textsuperscript{15} It was impossible for them to convey their belief that using force was a terrible idea through the vertical structure of the decision making process. This fact is extremely apparent as the decision to issue the ultimatum that eventually committed England to military action was only made by the five innermost members of the Egypt Committee.\textsuperscript{16} The vertical structure of decision-making in the British government involved many players at various levels, but those at the top were unreceptive to the opinions of those below them. The ‘chiefs’ overruled the

\textsuperscript{10} Ibid., 66.
\textsuperscript{11} Benedict Dyson, “Prime Minister and Core Executive in British Foreign Policy: Process, Outcome and Quality of Decision” (PhD diss., Washington State University, 2004), 158.
\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., 158.
\textsuperscript{13} Howard J. Dooley, “Great Britain’s ‘Last Battle’ in the Middle East: Notes on Vacinet Planning during the Suez Crisis of 1956,” \textit{The International History Review} 11.3 (1989): 499.
\textsuperscript{14} Brady, “The Cabinet System,” 75.
'Indians' during the Suez Crisis, allowing England to ignore the potentially more rational voices that counseled against occupying the Canal.

The members of the Egypt Committee acted consistently with the bureaucratic policy model's proposition that "where you stand depends on where you sit" during the Suez Crisis. This proposition explains how policymakers are compelled by their respective roles and personal affiliations to argue for or against the implementation of an action. The rationality of said action is a secondary consideration in this case. The Committee was composed of Prime Minister Eden, Foreign Minister Selwyn Lloyd, Chancellor of the Exchequer Harold Macmillan, President of the Council Lord Salisbury, Commonwealth Secretary Earl Home, and Minister of Defense Walter Monckton. Each member of the Committee competed with the others in an effort to ensure that his view, rationally based on the perceived realities presented by his respective role, was successful. Macmillan was the most hawkish competitor on the committee, immediately advocating for military collusion with Israel at the outbreak of the Crisis. His position as the Chancellor of the Exchequer would not necessarily indicate that he would advocate military involvement unless one takes into account the potential threat that the closure of the canal posed to the Exchequer's revenues and ability to function. Macmillan had, however, recently been removed from the post of Foreign Minister where he had taken a particular interest in Middle Eastern affairs. He tried to take advantage of his newly restored policy making role by advocating ambitious military plans that fit his grand vision of how the Middle East could be reorganized. Selwyn Lloyd, the man who replaced Macmillan, was forced to approach the Crisis from a different point of view since he occupied the post of chief diplomat in the British government. He advocated for a negotiated resolution to the whole affair. His training as a diplomat and relationship with Dag Hammarskjold, Secretary General of the UN, led him to believe that one could go through the UN to reach an acceptable arrangement with Egypt. He even continued to argue his case in Sevres when the Sevres Protocols that tied Britain to military action were being negotiated. Lloyd eventually acquiesced to the idea of using force due to the fact that his role made him a subordinate of the Prime Minster. Eden acted as a 'superpower' in the decision making process with the most power to influence any other individual player. Though he had a history as a diplomat, his new office demanded a different approach. The Prime Minister was responsible for maintaining Britain's worldwide influence, and Eden feared Britain's status was in decline and that it was losing its grip in the Middle East. His role as leader of the government also dictated that he had to keep a keen eye on public and political opinion, and accusations that he was "[excessively appeasing] Egypt" weighed heavily upon him. He felt compelled by his role as Prime Minister to firmly respond to these personal and international challenges. This attempt to muster a firm response manifested itself in Eden matching

---

17 Dooley, "Last Battle," 494.
18 Ibid., 495.
19 Ibid., 495.
22 Ibid., 122, 165.
Macmillan’s zeal in supporting the use of military force. The roles the men on the Egypt Committee occupied caused them to act in a very particular way. As their actions were not governed by rationality, it is understandable that these men and the others on the Committee eventually accepted the irrational action of occupying the Suez Canal Region.

Together, the bureaucratic policy decision-making model’s three propositions effectively helped to answer the question of why Britain made such an irrational decision during the Suez Crisis. The propositions create a clear framework for assessing the extent to which Britain’s actions conformed to the model. In the case of Suez, all three propositions are evident. The model is able to explain why England chose an action that its policymakers did not intend for it to make and that would have been unexpected were Britain viewed as a unitary actor. It also explains the irrational behavior of policy makers in key roles and how they were unable to be influenced by others lower down in the structure of the decision making process. The ease with which the propositions of this framework can be applied is what makes this theoretical tool so useful.

Though the bureaucratic policy model answers many questions about why Britain was steered down the path of using military force, it fails to account for many aspects of British decision-making. The first of these aspects is that not all of the policy makers in the Egypt Committee and the British cabinet conformed to the proposition ‘where you stand depends on where you sit.’ Of note is Defense Minister Walter Monckton who, according to the bureaucratic policy model, would be expected to advocate for the military action that Britain eventually decided to take. This is based on the assumption that military action would increase funding and further the interests of his department. Surprisingly, he was the most vocal of any cabinet member in his opposition to the use of force.24 On the whole, however, cabinet ministers and members of the Egypt Committee adhered to the position on the Crisis that would be expected of them by the bureaucratic policy model.

It could be argued that the bureaucratic policy model fails to explain the decision making process within the British government in several other ways. Central to these arguments is the assertion that Britain’s decision to use force was not wholly unintended by every member of the cabinet. It has already been noted that Macmillan advocated for military action from the start and was largely successful in his efforts. Some have also argued that Prime Minister Eden was for military involvement and the overthrow of Nasser from the beginning of the crisis because of a personal disgust for Nasser.25 In other words, Britain’s action could be seen as action with intention. This, however, does not necessarily eliminate the bureaucratic policy model’s usefulness in explaining the conflict. A competition between individuals still existed during the decision making process and it was not apparent until the latter stages of the crisis that those who advocated military action would prevail.26 The process of decision-making was consistent with that of the bureaucratic policy model even though the final outcome was not entirely unintended.

An additional shortcoming of the bureaucratic policy model in explaining Britain’s decision making in the Suez Crisis lies in the unique nature of the

competition that took place within the cabinet. The Egypt Committee was initially formed as a collection of senior individuals in the British cabinet, but over the course of the conflict it took on the traits of a miniature organization with its own agenda and interests. The group had its own support structure with several subcommittees.\textsuperscript{27} The group’s members also suffered from a degree of tunnel vision or ‘groupthink’ that limited the ability for any member of the committee to dissent. For this reason, the Egypt Committee became a ‘partial cabinet,’ essentially more of an organization than a group of individuals.\textsuperscript{28} As the crisis progressed, the competition over policy was fought between this partial cabinet and the greater cabinet. The decisions that resulted from the struggle between these two groups could potentially be better analyzed better using Allison’s organizational structure model due to the way in which the groups developed.\textsuperscript{29} However, the bureaucratic policy remains the best model as the members of the partial cabinet changed so often that it would be impossible to call them an organization.\textsuperscript{30} Even though the bureaucratic policy model is imperfect in analyzing the crisis, it remains a very effective lens of analysis.

Models other than Allison’s organizational structure model can attempt to fill the gaps left by the bureaucratic policy model’s explanation of British actions. Prominent among these theories is the cognitive model of analysis, which complements the bureaucratic policy model. This model assumes that an individual would make decisions based on a number of their personal features including past experiences, personality, and skill. While the bureaucratic policy model explained how a minority opinion could influence state actions, it did not explain how that minority found the conviction to push for the adoption of their ideas during the decision making process. The cognitive model is able to explain this conviction, especially in the case of Éden. Eden had been in government during the 1930’s and remembered the disastrous appeasement process well. Uneasy with Nasser before the nationalization of the canal, he drew comparisons between Nasser and Hitler and Mussolini during the Crisis.\textsuperscript{31} This historical framing and the aforementioned sensitivity of Eden to accusations of appeasing Egypt led to him advocating a policy of overthrowing Nasser in correspondences with American President Eisenhower from early September 1956.\textsuperscript{32} When examined more closely it also appears that Macmillan’s obsession with using force and the groupthink suffered by the Egypt Committee are better accounted for by the cognitive model than the bureaucratic policy model.\textsuperscript{33} The cognitive model complements the bureaucratic policy quite well by showing why the members of the Egypt Committee felt as strongly as they did about pursuing military action in Egypt.

Without the aide of the bureaucratic policy model it is very difficult to understand how Britain settled on the idea that occupying the Canal region was the best solution to the Suez Crisis. The model provides a great deal of insight into a complex process whose outcome can never be predicted and is seldom a rational action. For all its shortcomings, it is effective save for a few unique

\textsuperscript{27} Brady, “The Cabinet System,” 66.
\textsuperscript{29} Allison, “Conceptual Models,” 690.
\textsuperscript{30} Seymour-Ure, “War Cabinets,” 184.
\textsuperscript{31} Rothwell, Eden, 212.
\textsuperscript{32} Ibid., 212.
\textsuperscript{33} Kyle, Suez, 319; Verbeek, “Beliefs,” 307.
considerations associated with the Suez Crisis. It remains to be seen whether policymakers can recognize the irrationality of their decision-making process and decrease the chances of another Suez occurring in the future.

Works Cited


"Egypt. Further Correspondence Part X. On 1 January 1956 the Republic of Sudan was proclaimed and was recognized by Great Britain and Egypt." Confidential Print: Middle East. Archives Direct: The National Archives, UK. Accessed 27 Nov. 2013. http://www.archivesdirect.am


The Transformation of Political Islam in Turkey: the AK Party

by Aishe Jamal

After the election of Turkey’s AK Party in 2002, its effect on Turkish politics and society has often been debated. While some argue that it is an Islamist faction, others believe that despite its Islamic influences, the party has had a positive effect on the country by becoming a more moderate government that expresses the compatibility of Islam with democracy, while still allowing Turkey to remain a secular nation. The AK Party is different from its predecessors and ensures that Turkey is the most democratic nation in the Middle East. By examining the role of the 1997 coup, providing a comparison with previous Islamist governments, and assessing some of the AK Party’s policies, this essay argues that the party has distanced itself from its Islamist roots and seeks to maintain a specific notion of secularism in Turkey while striving to attain democratic consolidation.

Since the foundation of the Republic of Turkey and Ataturk’s reforms, specifically the policy of secularism, tensions between secularism and Islam have slowly begun to emerge. They were contained in the early years of the republic, but this issue was never completely resolved and turned into a major concern in democratic politics. The election of the Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (AK Party) in 2002 further contributed to the salience of this long-standing issue in Turkey. Due to its Islamic political background, the AK Party has received criticism for being anti-secular and having a secret Islamist agenda. However, the party rejects such criticisms and calls itself a “conservative democratic” political movement.

What does the notion of secularism mean in Turkey? Is it a valid statement that the AK Party pursues a secret Islamic agenda and opposes secularism? What is the background to the emergence of the AK Party and what is its vision? Are the AK Party’s policies and views compatible with secularism and democracy? In order to evaluate these questions and the AK Party’s stance on Islamism, secularism, and democracy, it is necessary to briefly look at previous Islamic parties and the party’s journey by analyzing the emergence of the AK Party and the effect of the 1997 soft coup on its transformation. Moreover, an evaluation is needed of the AK Party’s policies regarding accession to the European Union, their changing foreign policy, the Kurdish question and the AK Party, as well as the controversial headscarf issue. While members of the party might be committed to Islam, the AK Party as a political organization is not a threat to secularism or democracy. This essay will argue that the AK Party has broken away from its Islamist background and has transformed into a party that is not Islamist, and that the 1997 soft coup acted as a catalyst for this transformation. The policies and views of the AK Party are a reflection of the fact that the party acts in accordance with notions of secularism and seeks to achieve democratic consolidation.

In order to understand the Turkish version of secularism, the different modes and concepts of the term need to be examined.1 The establishment of the
Republic gave birth to the modern state of Turkey and secularism was a fundamental factor of it. Immediately after its election, the AK Party began to face criticism that its leaders would govern the country according to their religious views. However, it is essential to point out that there is no concrete definition of secularism in Turkey. Although the Constitutional Court of Turkey holds a definition, it is problematic because it is based on the 1980 Constitution that was applied after the military takeover. Commonly known in Turkey as “laicism,” this policy of the state having control over religion was implemented by Atatürk and substantially impacted the establishment of the Republic. However, secularism as envisioned by Mustafa Kemal did not mean complete separation of religion and state, but rather the regulation of religion by the state in the public sphere.

Secularism can be interpreted in various ways and this is precisely what the AK Party has attempted to achieve. In arguing that state policies towards religion are a result of conflicting ideologies, Ahmed Kuru identifies two conflicting trends in secular states – assertive and passive secularism. He defines assertive secularism as the state’s exclusion of religion from the public sphere and its confinement to the private sphere, while passive secularism allows for the public visibility of religion. From the foundation of the Turkish Republic to the 1950s assertive secularism was practiced, and pro-Islamic groups from then to the 1990s believed in an Islamist yet liberal view of secularism. The AK Party leans towards passive secularism and supports “state neutrality toward all religions and doctrines.”

Similarly, Hakan Yavuz categorizes three different modes of secularism that can be observed in Turkey. The first mode is a militant version of secularism favored by the Kemalists, which stresses “freedom from” and is defended by the Constitutional Court. The second is a conservative Turkish-Muslim understanding, which advocates for the control of religion and is followed by center and religious rights parties. The third mode is liberal, stressing the separation of religion and politics, and is followed by libertarians and the Alevi community. Yavuz also notes that the Turkish version of secularism is different from that of Western countries, focusing on the control of religion rather than separation from the state. In reviewing these modes of secularism, it is clear that the AK Party leans towards Kuru’s passive secularism as well as Yavuz’s second mode of secularism, with the party leaders advocating for a democratically negotiated secularism. In a speech, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan stated:

Secularism, as the key guarantee of societal peace and democracy, is a concept with two dimensions. Secularism’s first dimension is that the state should not be structured according to religious laws. This requires a standardized, unitary and undivided legal order. Secularism’s second

---

4 Ibid., 144.
5 Ibid., 140.
6 Hakan M. Yavuz, Secularism and Muslim Democracy in Turkey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 144.
7 Ibid., 170.
dimension is that the state should be neutral and keep an equal distance from all religion and belief.8

Especially with a majority Muslim population, the ideology of secularism in Turkey can and should be interpreted differently, which is exactly what the AK Party and Erdoğan have done. Since secularism is a way of reinterpreting the role of religion in a given society, Islamism and secularism should be looked at as two cooperative concepts in order for Islam to be reconstructed to conform to the needs of the state. However, conforming to a different version of secularism does not mean that the AK Party is in conflict with this policy, on the contrary, they believe it is a compulsory factor in preserving the republic.

It is important to note that the term “Islamist” can sometimes be problematic as it is a Western construct and has negative connotations. But it often describes people who want to integrate their religion into their public life, while “political Islam” is often defined as political activity that openly uses Islamic discourse and related symbols.9 This is how the terms will be used in this essay.

In order to thoroughly assess whether the AK Party is Islamist and its adherence to secularism and democracy, a short review of previous Islamic parties in Turkey must be outlined. Despite the execution of strict secular reforms after the foundation of the Republic, Islam remained important on a personal level, especially for the masses that did not live in urban areas. After the multi-party era emerged, center-right and religious parties used religious values in order to appeal to the Turkish masses and the larger Turkish population.10 First, the Democratic Party of Adnan Menderes exercised a more tolerant policy towards Islam. After the 1960 military coup, Islam’s political appeal further increased and in the 1970s, more political parties who had Islamist ideas slowly began to appear. Particularly, in the 1970s Necmettin Erbakan founded the National Outlook Movement (Milli Görüş Hareketi), which was significant because a number of political parties formed as offshoots of this movement. The NOM emphasizes the renewal of national Turkish and Muslim values as a solution to the societal issues caused by both Westernization and secularization. It embraces the Ottoman past and criticizes “cosmopolitanism.”11 The leaders of the AK Party were part of this movement.

Consequently, Erbakan founded the National Order Party (MNP) on 28 January 1970, the first political party with an openly Islamic orientation.12 However, the Constitutional Court of Turkey closed the party exactly one year later in 1971 due to its anti-secular activities and its claimed desire to establish a theocratic order.13 The following year, Süleyman Arif Emre formed the National Salvation Party (MSP) but Erbakan replaced him shortly after. A further contribution to the resurgence of Islam in Turkish society occurred in

---

8 Ibid., 159.
the aftermath of the 1980 military intervention that brought down Süleyman Demirel and the Justice Party. With the restoration of democratically elected governments three years later, a Turkish-Islamic synthesis occurred, one that accentuated religion as a part of Turkey’s culture. Ironically, the military contributed to this attempt at strengthening the role of Islam as a way of combating radical leftist ideologies.

Within the last decade, Turkey has altered dramatically and this change is attributed to the 28 February 1997, which led to the restructuring of Turkish politics. This is commonly referred to as the “soft coup” because, unlike Turkey’s previous military coups, it did not result in a military takeover but rather was a reaction to the increasing role of political Islam in the country.

This began with the Welfare Party (Refah) and its establishment in 1983 as a way of replacing the MSP. The party reached the height of its power during the 1995 general elections when it became the leading party with 21 percent of the votes. This was an extremely important event because an openly Islamic political party took hold of power for the first time in Turkey’s republican history. The Welfare Party’s rise to power immediately began to worry secularists. Its policies, such as supporting the Islamic veil in state institutions were perceived as anti-secular activities. Other events such as Erbakan hosting a Ramadan dinner for leaders of religious orders in Turkey caused further discontent. The military has always regarded itself as the guardian of the state, and as a result the administration began to mobilize major businesses, media, universities, and the judiciary branch against the government. In February 1997 the military directly expressed its disappointments with the Welfare Party’s religious activities in the National Security Council and “advised” its leaders to step down. Yavuz says this soft coup was an attempt “to cleanse the public sphere of the growing Muslim presence.” The February 28 process led to the Welfare Party’s resignation and the dismantling of the coalition. In addition, the Constitutional Court banned the party in January of 1998 because “the party acted against the principles of the secular republic.” Members of the Welfare Party formed another Islamist party in 1998, the Virtue Party, but it was banned in 2001 for similar reasons.

Although it had obtained the largest number of votes, the Welfare Party continued with openly Islamic politics and refused to become more moderate. The February 28 process resulted in the restructuring of Turkish politics because it acted as an educational tool for Islamic groups, making it evident that they need a different approach in politics in order to succeed. Furthermore, with the threat of constitutional banning, Turkish Islamic movements and parties had to learn to operate in a restricted political environment. The AK Party and its leaders learned this lesson and implemented the necessary alterations, moving away from political Islam.

The February 28 Process led to the emergence and formation of the AK Party as a political organization that broke away completely from its predecessors. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the charismatic former mayor of Istanbul, created the AK Party in 2001 along with Abdullah Gül and members of other

---

political parties. Both Erdoğan and Gül have an Islamist political background, as they were former members of the National Outlook Movement as well as the Islamist Welfare Party and the Virtue Party. In the 2002 national elections, the AK Party won with a landslide victory after receiving 34.3 percent of the votes and 365 out of 500 seats in Parliament, and formed a single party government.  

Many people regarded the AK Party as Islamist because its leaders originate from an Islamic political background but on the contrary, the party transformed into a center-right party that began to follow a progressive and moderate program. The party outright rejects such perceptions, stating that its political identity is that of a “conservative democracy” and that it is “a mass-based party based on the fundamentals of conservatism.” Some scholars define it as a conservative political party whose members have strong Islamic feelings, but try to distance themselves from their affiliations to Islamic parties. Yılmaz says that, “The AK Party is a successful example showing that political participation and the opportunities available for the Islamist parties can generate political change, resulting in the transformation of Islamism to non-Islamism in the Turkish context.”

After the February 28 process Islamists did not take democracy seriously, but in the years after the coup the idea of Islamizing society ended and the AK Party is a reflection of this. The party separated itself from the leadership and ideology of previous parties, including Islamism, and began to focus on other issues. These included economic reforms, a pro-Western foreign policy, and approaching the headscarf issue as a human rights problem. In regard to secularism, the AK Party believes it is “a principle of freedom and social” peace and it is necessary for democracy. Also, it defines democracy “as a form of government where legal rules are created with the approval of the citizens” and as such, it should be a reflection of the national will. Despite the pro-Islamic background of the AK Party, it can be said that its leaders follow Islam in the social realm but abandon it as a political movement.

The AK Party’s popularity increased steadily and this is evident from the 2007 election results, in which they won a clear second term victory by obtaining 47 percent of the votes. This was the first time in over 50 years that a ruling party won another election with a greater margin. A polling company found that the top issues for Turkish voters were economic performance and social policies rather than religious sentiments. Therefore, the victory confirmed that people were satisfied with AK Party policies and they disliked the crisis that the secular-military establishment had created over the presidency, such as their statements and unification of leftist parties. This milestone in Turkish politics is a representation of a democratic government that conforms to secularism, because it would not have been this successful if this were untrue.

Turkey’s economic achievements throughout the AK Party’s rule are

---

22 Ibid., 346.
23 Yavuz, “Cleansing Islam from the Public Sphere,” 27.
30 Dagi, “Turkey’s AKP in Power,” 40.
undeniably a drastic improvement. The country has achieved growth of over 5 percent each year, with the income per capita reaching the critical threshold of $10,000, which is a threefold increase since the AK Party came to power. This has allowed Turkey to become the fifth largest economy in Europe and the seventeenth in the world. The AK Party acknowledges that development in Turkey depends largely on its ability to establish a market-oriented economy while integrating with the global market, and favours a free-market economy in accordance with its center-right position in the political spectrum. They emphasize the “importance of withdrawal of state from economic activities… from a desire to provide economic bases for democracy. A free market economy cannot develop if the state takes part in economic activities.”32 This policy of integration also means the party works with the International Monetary Fund. Erdoğan has encouraged a successful privatization program and foreign investment, which has increased twentyfold under the AK Party.33 Their neo-liberal economic policies allowed for the emergence of a new middle class and the growth of businesses and markets.34 After years of high economic growth and political stability and despite the AK Party’s tensions with the Kemalists, Turkish people are content with their country’s status and are able to enjoy a more vibrant social, cultural, and economic life due to better governance. By proposing that the state take a limited role in the economic sphere and encouraging foreign investment and integration with the global market, the party has contributed profoundly to democratic consolidation.

The AK Party’s stance on accession to the European Union has played a major role in demonstrating their adherence to democracy and compatibility with secularism. Their views on globalization and membership to the EU differ from any previous Islamic positions. They regard this as part of Turkey’s modernization and democratization process, because possible membership to the EU means the government explicitly discarding the idea of an Islamic government.35 In the words of Erdoğan, “We regard Turkey’s EU membership as the biggest democratization project after the proclamation of the Republic.”36 In order to meet the criteria set forth by the EU, Turkey has made an effort to liberalize its political structure after the military intervention in 1997 and this has been especially evident under the government of the AK Party. Their determination to achieve EU membership and democratic consolidation are revealed in their multiple reform packages passed through Parliament.

In the Copenhagen Summit of December 2002, Turkey was expected to be given a date for the start of accession negotiations, but the European Council decision in December 2005 and the increasing demands made of Turkey diminished its hopes of joining the European organization and caused many people to start questioning whether full membership was possible. Secular nationalists defend anti-globalism and nationalism and are especially critical of membership to the EU.37 Despite this, approximately 80 percent of the population support membership, as does the AK Party.38 To further promote democratization and human rights, the AK Party leadership is aware that the
possibility of EU membership must be kept open. This aspiration to be part of a Western organization further demonstrates the AK Party’s conformity to secularism and democracy.

Turkey’s foreign policy under the AK Party government is another factor that differs from previous governments – it has fostered relations with Middle East countries while still upholding relations with the West. AK Party’s program declares that, “In this globalizing world, Turkey should adopt a foreign policy on the basis of balancing global conditions with her national interests.”

To get a better understanding of Turkish foreign policy under the AK Party, some policies developed by Ahmet Davutoğlu (current Foreign Policy Minister who also served as chief advisor to Erdoğan) need to be addressed. He advocates for a multidimensional foreign policy in Turkey, in which the country should seek to extend its influence because of its geopolitical position and “move Turkey beyond being a bridge between East and West and to turn it into a point of convergence.” Davutoğlu also encourages the “zero problems” policy, i.e. Turkey should try to minimize problems with its neighbours while increasing economic relations. Analyzers of foreign policy often contend “it was Davutoğlu who changed the rhetoric and practice of Turkish foreign policy, bringing it to a dynamic and multidimensional orientation.”

Recently, some criticize the AK Party’s foreign policy, arguing that the AK Party’s policies adopt Middle Easternization instead of Europeanization. Others say this new activism in the Middle East is a result of “neo-Ottomanism,” where Turkey is determined to promote better diplomatic, political and economic relations in the Middle East. But as mentioned above, the AK Party gives priority to EU membership. It also supports the development of relations with all countries, including not only the West but also the Balkans, Eurasian and Far Eastern countries. The AK Party does not want to be defined by its military capabilities, but rather its democratic identity and economic power. This is a clear indication of a secular, democratic foreign policy.

The Kurdish question is one of the fundamental challenges to democratic consolidation in Turkey but the AK Party has dealt better with this issue than any previous government. Turkey is home to the largest Kurdish population in the world, with approximately 8 to 12 million Kurds, whose demands range from full secession to at least any form of recognition of cultural and individual rights. Although hesitant at first, Erdoğan was the first prime minister to acknowledge the existence of a Kurdish question in Turkey due to the AK Party’s moderate and democratic stance – one that differs from its predecessors. The party pushed for numerous laws and reform packages such as giving ethnic Kurds the right to learn the Kurdish language in school, allowing private channels as well as Kurdish language in the media. In fact, in the 2007

40 Ibid.
45 Yavuz, Secularism and Muslim Democracy in Turkey, 171.
elections, the AK Party obtained more votes than the pro-Kurdish Democratic Society Party in traditional Kurdish areas.\textsuperscript{47}

The AK Party has not reached a permanent solution to the Kurdish question, but within the context it is extremely difficult to do so. Hakan Yavuz claims this is because governments have not sought expert opinion on the problem\textsuperscript{48} but there are other reasons why the AK Party faces restrictions in implementing more pro-Kurdish policies. For instance, the Republican People’s Party (CHP) constantly opposes AK Party policies, sometimes just for the sake of opposition. Although the policies implemented so far may not seem substantial, it is much more than any previous government (Islamic or not) has done for people of Kurdish origin in Turkey, which is a sign of further democratization in the country.

It is essential to examine the headscarf issue as it pertains to secularism and democracy because it has become a controversial issue, since some regard it as a political symbol of Islamism. In 1982, shortly after the third military coup, the Council of Ministers approved a law that banned the use of the veil in universities and state institutions.\textsuperscript{49} This is an evident problem because covered females were denied fundamental educational opportunities as a result of the law and they were not allowed into universities. In addition, while covered women would be allowed at a soldier’s private funeral, it would be illegal for them to attend a formal military event.\textsuperscript{50} The problem caused rifts in Turkish society because although women who wear the headscarf see it as an expression of religious freedom, secularists perceive it as a symbol of political Islam.

The AK Party does not consider the headscarf a religious issue, but rather a problem of basic rights. While previous Islamic parties such as the Welfare Party regarded the issue as a violation of religious freedom, the AK Party approached it as a problem of human rights. In other words, the AK Party “considered the headscarf issue ‘as a matter of basic rights’ but not as an issue of religion or religiosity.”\textsuperscript{51} The AK Party succeeded in passing a reform through Turkish Parliament in February 2008 lifting the ban in universities and another democratization package in September 2013 allowing public employees to wear the headscarf to work.\textsuperscript{52} Upon removing the law, Erdoğan stated, "a dark time eventually comes to an end. Headscarf-wearing women are full members of the republic, as well as those who do not wear it." Thus, the lifting of the headscarf ban does not mean a breaking away from secularization, but rather another step towards democratization under the government of the AK Party.

Like any other political party, the AK Party has been subject to criticism, especially by the Kemalist establishment and extreme secularists. Opposition members especially like to make comments against the ruling party, such as Erdoğan Toprak of the CHP who says that Tayyip Erdoğan “would like to bring the sultan back” while others have called him “a religious monger.”\textsuperscript{53} Other criticisms include the AK Party’s engagement in social engineering or their

\textsuperscript{47} Yavuz, Secularism and Muslim Democracy in Turkey, 200.
\textsuperscript{48} Başkan, “Accommodating Political Islam in Turkish Democracy,” 356.
alleged secret Islamist agenda, but these criticisms have no firm evidence because the AK Party has not implemented any Islamist policies so far. The party’s moderate stance does not mean that certain aspects of its rule should not be criticized; there is certainly room for improvement both within the party itself and among its members. But this should not take away from the fact that the AK Party learned from its predecessors, and that the February 28 process led to a positive change in Turkish politics.

Finally, the AK Party’s constant affiliation with Erdoğan is extremely noteworthy. As its founder, Erdoğan has always been associated with the AK Party and this is one of its fundamental problems, but there are many other leading and important figures in the party. Abdullah Gül is one such, and many who criticize Erdoğan for being too authoritarian are actually supporters of Gül. In fact, there are predictions that the party may split between supporters of Erdoğan and those who favor Gül.

Turkey has endured a process of transformation in the last couple of decades that has proven to be positive for both Turkish politics and society in the long run. The 1997 soft coup allowed for a new opportunity in the political sphere, one that religion-friendly politicians were able to take advantage of, and the AK Party and its leaders did precisely this. Despite the religious background of its founders, the AK Party has been entirely transformed from its predecessors on a political level. Its leaders may be followers of Islam in their private life, but they changed their ideology as a result of the coup. They do not bring their Islamic beliefs to politics and they certainly do not pursue an Islamist agenda. Not only would they face the threat of constitutional banning if they were to do so, but they would also lose their popular support. As stated earlier in this essay, the AK Party is fully compatible with secularism and democracy and this is evident in their policies regarding membership of the European Union, their multidimensional foreign policy and their market-oriented economy that has resulted in tremendous economic advancement. In addition, the AK Party has dealt with the Kurdish question better than any other government and has succeeded in removing the decades long headscarf ban, which denied women their basic rights. Indeed, there is room for improvement within the AK Party and their policies, and its close association with the Prime Minister, Erdoğan, is undesirable. Judging by the policies that the AK Party has pursued, it can be concluded that it is not an Islamist party and its leaders are not practitioner of political Islam but rather strive to conform to a specific version of secularism in Turkey and constantly move towards democratic consolidation. The AK party is a conservative-right party that has adopted an alternate interpretation of secularism and conforms to democracy. The AK Party shows how Islamic elites are able to reintroduce themselves into a politically competitive atmosphere by embracing democracy while still remaining a secular republic. One can only hope that this improvement in Turkey can continue further.
Works Cited


Ancient Egypt: Perspectives on Women in Male-Dominated Literature

by Emily Hotton

Through the male-dominated genres of Ancient Egyptian literature, one sees how the perspective of men categorizes women into two rigid niches: the obedient Mut and promiscuous Hathor. Using examples of instructional and narrative literature, such as the “Instructions of Any” and the “Tale of the Two Brothers,” and examples of the common letters excavated from the New Kingdom town of Deir el-Medina, this article discusses the roles which women were placed within literature, and the impossibility of such black-and-white division. Cast predominately as the antagonists, women were mostly perceived by men as dangerous and vindictive beings. Few examples effectively counter this idea, with the exception of the narrative “The Doomed Prince” and the everyday letters of Deir el-Medina which displayed the empowered and independent nature of women in the New Kingdom.

The lives and rights of common women in ancient Egypt is a much speculated and studied topic, though there is very little evidence available. Unlike with the elite, there are no elaborate stone carvings, annals, or precious documents which detail the kinds of things one might find useful in such a study. The evidence available, though few in number, are rich in quality and context. This paper shall look at the categorizing of women in ancient Egyptian society, using literary evidence, such as fabricated tales and instructional literature, with an emphasis on the division of the “Mut” woman, who was obedient and matronly, and the “Hathor” woman, who was wild and sexual in nature. This paper shall explain examples of both categorizations, along with examples of women who did not fit either category, using common letters from everyday life. Failure to conform as an obedient, matronly Mut woman was seen as drifting from the socially acceptable norm and therefore put the woman in the more negative category. In discussing these issues, both positive and negative perspectives within the literature will be discussed.

Before getting to the main content of the paper, a brief overview of the beginnings of literature in Egypt shall be presented. The first evidence of literature in ancient Egypt is in the late Old Kingdom, around the 6th Dynasty, in the form of a lyrical component of pyramid texts and tomb biographies. As history played its course, so did literature, growing into multiple genres and subgenres. Instructional literature, which comprises a good portion of the evidence for this study, was a constant genre through most of the Middle and New Kingdoms, possibly even going back to the Old Kingdom. The most famous of the instructional literature genre include brief instructions on life (and in relation to women in some way or another) which can shed light on the perceptions of women in daily life. The Instructions of Ptahhotep, Any, and

---


2 Ibid.
Amenemope all contain small sections concerning women, whether it be how to treat them, or how to avoid them lest “[they] steal your heart.” These instructions usually covered a wide variety of topics, and while only a very small part would be about women, they supply a non-fictional perspective on the types of women perceived by men.

The idea of women being divided into two categories was a popular concept among the ancient Egyptian males. To men, it appears women were either the honourable, obedient and ideal “Mut” type or the dishonourable, sexual and dangerous “Hathor” type. The prescription is inspired by the goddesses for whom the categories are named after. Mut is the wife of Amun-Re, mother of Khonsu, and is seen as the “female compassionate man meets in his mother, sister, and to a certain extent his wife.” To contrast this matrilineal figure is that of Hathor, the goddess of love, sex, fertility as well as one who is also known for her destructive streak. The most commonly featured women within narratives, these dishonourable Hathor women would betray their husbands, lie, or were unknown women who could entice men into their schemes and ruin their lives.

Before delving into fictional and instructional literature, the letters of Deir el-Medina must be taken into consideration. Being a special city in its own right, entirely made up of the workmen for the Valley of the Kings, much evidence is preserved within its walls. Of the 470 letters found within the city, 1 in 7 are concerning women. The letters themselves give a fascinating glimpse into the daily lives of the common ancient Egyptians. They also display how women corresponded between themselves, asking for favours and help. Several letters from McDowell’s “Village Life” are excellent examples of these relationships between women. One set of letters includes a request for a shawl from Nebu-her-Ma’at-tjau to Neb-iunt, while another displays a plea for help from Ta-kheti-shipse to her sister Ity, as she says her husband will throw her out if she cannot acquire more foodstuffs from her family. The correspondence in the letters could be between women, from them, to them, or simply concerning them. In one letter, a father promises to take his daughter in if the workman (who could also be her husband) throws her out.

The women’s letters from Deir el-Medina cover much more than simple requests and pleas. They also display how women sometimes carried out business in the absence of their husbands, or were themselves financially independent enough to not rely on any man. There is one stunning example among the letters of how a woman wrote to the vizier at the time because grain traders unfairly took a couple of sacks from her promised shipment. She relays to her husband, the scribe Nes-su-Amen-(em)-ope, who is away on business, what the vizier wrote back to her and also requests his assistance. Not only is this an example of how women could conduct business, but also

---

5 Barbara Watterson, *Women in Ancient Egypt* (New York: St. Martin’s, 1991), 16.
10 Ibid.
11 Ibid., 42.
12 Ibid.
13 Ibid., 44.
14 Ibid., 45.
how the vizier presumably had no problem communicating with her under those terms. Another example of fantastic female empowerment is a letter in which a man wrote to a woman whom he had tried twice to move in with, but had outwardly been refused.\textsuperscript{15} As the owner of the property, she had the right to refuse his insistent notion that he should live with her, and there was no legal or social reason in which he could force her.

This kind of evidence cannot really provide examples of women fitting into the Mut or Hathor divisions which men so often placed them. Real women, or real people in general, cannot be forced into such black-and-white categories which they are “supposed” to, and these letters are great examples of how a real woman was not just an obedient mother like Mut, or a deceiving temptress like Hathor. The letters, though perhaps not written by women personally, could have been dictated by them, and they are real examples of their daily lives. This more average, believable perception of women helps tone down the beliefs provided by the men of the instructional and narrative literature which is so sure in its categorization of women and their “true” character. Though some women truly could have been like Mut or Hathor, as they are described, the majority of women were probably not how some men had believed.

The fictional and instructional literature involving women is a different story than the letters, as most of them were written presumably by scribe men.\textsuperscript{16} Though a piece may seem to be from a female perspective, the author is almost certainly male and therefore cannot be taken at face value.\textsuperscript{17} These documents, however, are useful in understanding a male’s viewpoint on women in society, as displayed in many of the instructional pieces.\textsuperscript{18} In general, men’s perception seemed to go accordingly: a mother is honourable, especially if she conformed to society’s ideals, while any other woman who did not meet these expectations placed by men was dishonourable.\textsuperscript{19} Though women had considerable freedom in Egypt, for an ancient civilization, and could do and achieve many things, they were predominantly expected to marry, bear children, and run households above any other occupation.\textsuperscript{20} To break from these roles and traditions would be considered dishonourable, not only to the women, but their families as well.

There are many negative examples of women living outside societal roles within literature. Wisdom literature tends to be more forgiving to women, with few exceptions such as in the “Instructions of Any” (Ramesside), where he advises men to stay away from foreign women.\textsuperscript{21} Any also advises men not to pursue women, and generally believes women to be temptresses.\textsuperscript{22} He states: “Beware of a woman who is a stranger...do not know her carnally. A deep water whose course is unknown, such is a woman away from her husband. She is ready to ensnare you, a great deadly crime when it is heard.”\textsuperscript{23} Alternatively, Any does admit positive things of some women, especially mothers, which will be discussed later on. Anksheshonq, on the other hand, in his rather unforgiving

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., 46.
\textsuperscript{16} Robins, \textit{Women in Ancient Egypt}, 176.
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., 176, 178.
\textsuperscript{20} Watterson, \textit{Women in Ancient Egypt}, 1.
\textsuperscript{22} Robins, \textit{Women in Ancient Egypt}, 177.
\textsuperscript{23} Lichtheim, \textit{Ancient Egyptian Literature: The New Kingdom}, 137.
Ptolemaic instruction, shares his opinion of women as being generally untrustworthy, with no morals or intellectual capabilities.24

Within the genre of narrative literature is where most of the negative views of women come to light, as they are the favourite antagonist of many of the pieces. For example, in the “Tale of the Two Brothers,” a New Kingdom narrative, both the wives of the brothers Anubis and Bata are unfaithful and betray their husbands.25 Anubis’ wife attempts to have carnal relations with his younger brother, Bata, and when he refuses, she “took fat and grease and made herself appear as if she had been beaten, in order to tell her husband, ‘It was your younger brother who beat me.’”26 Similarly, while Bata lives in the Valley of the Pines, his heart high in the branches of a tree, his wife betrays him in order to marry the Pharaoh and become queen by cutting down his tree and using its wood for her furniture.27 Both brothers’ wives are unfaithful, deceitful and vindictive, only looking out for their own interests and live outside the societal norms of an obedient and virtuous wife which would categorize them as Mut women. Though the brothers had rough times at the hands of women, they appear to be the virtuous and righteous heroes of the tale. Many stories follow this guide, with the men as the heroes and women as troublesome, vindictive individuals.28

In the tale “Truth and Falsehood,” again a New Kingdom creation, an elite woman desires a blind man whom she bears a son with, and while she raises her son, she makes his father the doorman.29 When her son questions her about his father and she tells him the truth, her son replies; “You deserve that your family be gathered and a crocodile be summoned,”30 essentially meaning her behaviour should condemn her to death.31 The wealthy woman, in conformation to the ideals of the honourable Mut woman, should not have had an affair in the first place, let alone seduce a blind man and give him a lowly position like a doorman while she lived in comfort with their son.

Though the evidence of a negative view against women seems abundant, there are actually very many instructions and narratives that do portray women more justly. Though, admittedly, some of the instructional literature have their faults in this area even still. While the Instruction of Ptahhotep (Old Kingdom) advises a man to love his wife and take care of her, it also states to “keep her from power, restrain her—her heart is her storm when she gazes—thus will you make her stay in your house.”32 Even though Ptahhotep is not condemning women as vindictive beings, he is still advising that they are unable to control themselves properly and men need to check them. Though the Instructions of Any had earlier been used as an example for negative commentary on women, he does raise points on the value and uses of some women, especially when concerning mothers. On the topic of mothers he says, “Double the food your mother gave you, support her as she supported you. She had a heavy load in you, but she did not abandon you.”33 Though his opinion of mothers is high, he also admits that wives can be acceptable women as well, but only as long as

24 Watterson, Women in Ancient Egypt, 12.
25 Robins, Women in Ancient Egypt, 178.
26 Lichtheim, Ancient Egyptian Literature: The New Kingdom, 205.
27 Ibid., 208.
28 Watterson, Women in Ancient Egypt, 14.
29 Lichtheim, Ancient Egyptian Literature: The New Kingdom, 212.
30 Ibid.
31 Ibid., 214.
32 Miriam Lichtheim, Ancient Egyptian Literature: The Old and Middle Kingdoms (Berkley: University of California, 2006), 1:69.
33 Lichtheim, Ancient Egyptian Literature: The New Kingdom, 141.
they do their duties correctly. For example, he writes, “do not control your wife in her house, when you know she is efficient.”  

He even goes on to say that “it is joy when your hand is with her, there are many who don’t know this.”  

For a man who believes in the division of Mut and Hathor women he seemingly believed in happy marriages.

Within narratives there is one outstanding example of women in positive perspectives: the New Kingdom tale of “The Doomed Prince.”  

In the story there is a prince who was prophesized at birth to be killed by either a crocodile, snake or dog, so his father constructs a house for him to live in safety. When he becomes an adult, he leaves the safety of the house with his greyhound (a gift from his childhood) and travels until he meets the Prince of the Naharin, who had put his only daughter in a house with a window 70 cubits (around 120 feet) from the ground. The man who reaches the window would earn her hand in marriage. Telling the other competitors that he had been cast out from his home by a wicked stepmother, he earns their compassion and they take care of him. Once he was rested and well, he joins their sport, reaches her window and claims the princess’ hand.  

Her father did not want the prince to marry her, believing him common, but his daughter says, “If he is taken away from me, I shall not eat, I shall not drink, I shall die right away!”  

Similarly when her father intends to kill the prince, she says, “If they slay him, when the sun set I shall be dead. I will not live an hour longer than he!” Eventually the prince is accepted by her father, they marry, and their life together begins. Though the earlier qualities of faithfulness displayed already portray the princess in a positive light, her actions later in the story take it one step further, by displaying her wisdom, forethought and bravery. The prince shares his fate with her, and she advises him to get rid of the greyhound (which he dismisses as nonsense), and later after he has fallen asleep, she intoxicates a snake which intended to bite him and hacks it to pieces with an axe.  

The actions and forethought of the princess are very unique in the story, as normally women do not display such masculine qualities in narrative. Her suggestion of leaving the greyhound showed wisdom of the possible threats and his fate, while her actions against the snake displayed bravery and faithfulness.

The women in the stories like “The Tale of the Two Brothers” and “Truth and Falsehood” would be the stereotypical Hathor women: giving into their desires, tempting men and being deceitful. Women like the princess in “The Doomed Prince,” were the epitome of the Mut woman because of their trustworthiness, faithfulness and piety. She is the kind of woman that Any would approve of because she does her duties and needs no reproach, while the other women would be the ones to be wary of: the unfamiliar and dangerous carnal women. These instructions and narratives give such insight into men’s perspective of women. Though the letters of Deir el-Medina are great for reconstructing daily life in a common city, the more formal compositions help us to see the societal side. Though most of the texts are New Kingdom, there

---

32 Miriam Lichtheim, Ancient Egyptian Literature: The Old and Middle Kingdoms (Berkley: University of California, 2006), 1:69.
33 Lichtheim, Ancient Egyptian Literature: The New Kingdom, 141.
34 Ibid., 143.
35 Ibid.
36 Ibid., 200.
37 Ibid.
38 Ibid., 201.
39 Ibid.
40 Ibid., 202.
41 Ibid.
are even examples from the Old Kingdom which can display a kind of linear view of women in general; a steady idea of the division between honourable and dishonourable and the respect of those who stayed within the norm.

With such a plethora of evidence from a time when not much survives in the rest of the world, it really is unique to even see so much writing involving women; the fairer sex which often was skimmed over until more recent times. To see that they had power, over men in these stories and over themselves in the Deir el-Medina letters, is a very interesting perspective on life in ancient Egypt. Though sometimes the narratives and instructions could be cruel towards the ideas of women—how only matronly and obedient women were considered acceptable and all those outside the norm were dishonourable—there is still the positive side to be seen in some of the other literature: they could be heroines too and they were not to be treated poorly just because of their gender.

Works Cited


Ending Isolation: The Ottoman Search for Security, 1908-1914

by Shahryar Pasandideh

In 1914 the Ottoman Empire made a fateful decision to enter the First World War through an alliance with Germany. In the following century that decision has been derided with members of the ruling Committee of Union and Progress elite being accused of ‘destroying’ the empire through their alleged imperialist fantasies. This essay contends that the role of personalities has been overemphasised in the existing literature. Rather than undertaking pan-Turanian and pan-Islamic expansionist policies, after taking over the reins of power in the hope of saving the empire, the Committee of Union and Progress undertook a long and fruitless search for security through alliance. It was the unique and dangerous circumstances of the July Crisis that provided the Ottoman Empire its first geopolitical suitor – Germany. This demanding courtship left the Ottomans faced with the terrible dichotomy of accepting the inevitability of the empire’s partition or gambling with war that offered the empire’s continued existence.

“When I contemplate all that Russia has done for centuries to bring about our destruction, and all that Britain has done during these last few years, then I consider this new crisis that has emerged to be a blessing. I believe that it is the Turks’ ultimate duty either to live like an honorable nation or to exit the stage of history gloriously.”

– Cemal Pasha, Ottoman Minister of Marine [Navy], November 2 1914

Much ink has been devoted to the study of the origins of the First World War. Yet one of its many episodes, the Ottoman entry into the war, has enjoyed a relative dearth of scholarship. Moreover, what scholarship exists is fixated on the role of personalities, particularly that of Enver Pasha, the Ottoman Minister of War. As such, the scholarship focuses on theories of intrigue and the workings of a small Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) ‘cabal’ and its role in steering the Ottoman Empire into the war. Yet it is this writer’s contention that too much emphasis has been placed on the role of personalities in the existing literature. Additionally, excessively lavish attention has been devoted to the intricacies of sagas such as the role of the German Admiral Wilhelm Souchon and his warships, the SMS Goebben and SMS Breslau, in ‘dragging’ the Ottoman Empire into the war. Instead, this paper takes a structural approach to the issue of Ottoman entry into the war by assessing the international environment the Ottoman Empire was placed in, as well as the Ottoman responses to this environment.

The Ottoman Empire entered the First World War through its own devices, at its own leisure, and in pursuit of its own interests. Finding itself in a desperately isolated position in a harsh international system, the Ottoman

---

1 Quoted from Mustafa Aksakal, The Ottoman Road to War in 1914: The Ottoman Empire and the First World War (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 19.
Empire, particularly the CUP elite that came to power following the 1908 revolution, concluded that attaining security through an alliance with a great power alliance bloc would be the only means of saving the empire. After a long and fruitless search, the Ottoman Empire attained such security through an alliance with Germany very late in the July Crisis. After attaining their much coveted alliance, however, the Ottomans were hesitant to actively participate in the war; desiring only the promise of security in a post-war environment. As such, they went to great lengths to stay out of the war. However, once it became clear that Germany would not abide by the terms of the alliance if the Empire did not intervene in the war, the Ottoman elite was confronted with the choice of either squandering their recently gained and much prized alliance or entering the war. Faced with this terrible decision, the Empire chose the latter and fatefuly entered the First World War.

The Young Turk revolution of 1908 did not simply come out of a desire to maintain independence and make Ottoman subjects equal as the Committee of Union and Progress’s (CUP) name suggests. Rather, the latent political opposition transformed into a coup as a result of fear that the ongoing meeting between the British and Russian monarchs was going to result in partition of the Empire. Nevertheless, once in power, the CUP began its ambitious reform program. They sought to modernize the economy and end the capitulatory regime. Moreover, the CUP had an ambitious foreign policy. They sought to bolster the military to make it potent enough to hold all the Balkan states in check and to keep the great powers at bay. Furthermore, the security that would result would provide the Empire with the necessary latitude to carry out reforms. In the long run, they hoped to make the Empire a respected part of the community of nations – akin to Japan’s transformation.

In hoping to realize these ambitions, the CUP recognized difficult obstacles presented by the international system. Many CUP elites recognized that the Europeans would not let the empire survive to carry out necessary reforms. As a result, the empire would need a great power patron to shelter behind. Moreover, the CUP adopted an attitude to the West that was different to that of previous reformists. While they sought to emulate the West, they were fully cognizant of the latter’s practice of realpolitik and they understood that to get Western acceptance and respect, they would have to strengthen the empire internally. As such, they were wary of European reform programs, noting that they always led to some serious calamity. In sum, the new leaders of the Empire believed that to save the empire, they would have to fight for it. While they succeeded in taking power, the CUP had to immediately face the international system’s welcome party. Prince Ferdinand of Bulgaria immediately proclaimed the independence of his principality. Within a day,

---

6 Ferzal Ahmad, “The Late Ottoman Empire” In The Great Powers and the End of the Ottoman Empire, ed. Marian Kent, (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1984), 12.
7 Fromkin, A Peace to End all Peace, 48.
8 Ludke, Jihad Made in Germany, 20.
9 Aksakal, The Ottoman Road to War, 9.
10 Ibid.
Austria-Hungary declared its annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, nominally Ottoman territories under Austro-Hungarian administration since 1878. Notably, the Austro-Hungarian action emerged after Vienna reached agreement with its traditional enemy, Russia, annexing the territories in return for supporting Russia’s right of passage through the Straits.\textsuperscript{12} Worse still, a third crisis emerged in Ottoman Crete, where Cretan delegates announced the island’s unification with Greece. All of this happened despite the 1878 Congress of Berlin still nominally being in effect.\textsuperscript{13}

Immediately sensing their acute isolation, from 1908 the CUP undertook a desperate search for security through alliance. Only through alliance, they reasoned, could they preserve the empire and undertake reforms. The problem, however, was that no one was interested in allying with the frail empire. The first to be approached was Great Britain, the Ottoman’s traditional patron. While the British had congratulated the CUP upon taking power, many in the Foreign Office were strongly anti-CUP.\textsuperscript{14} Nevertheless, the CUP admired liberal Britain, and believed it would be the power that would assist in removing the capitulations.\textsuperscript{15} Yet by 1910 it was clear that London, in conjunction with Paris, had no interest in assisting the Empire to reform.\textsuperscript{16} In fact, in 1908, 1911, and 1913, the Ottomans sought alliance with the British, only to be rebuffed on every occasion.\textsuperscript{17} The 1908 alliance proposal is quite telling. A few weeks after taking power, senior CUP figures went to London to seek an alliance.\textsuperscript{18} The British, however, now saw Egypt, not the Straits, as their bulwark. Moreover, the Anglo-Russian entente of 1907 had changed geopolitics.\textsuperscript{19} The most the British were willing to give was a naval mission.\textsuperscript{20}

The Italo-Ottoman War of 1911-1912 reminded the CUP that three years of attempts at breaking out of isolation had been utterly futile. Neither power bloc intervened on the Ottoman side out of fear of ‘fatally antagonizing’ Italy.\textsuperscript{21} Similar to the Bosnian annexation, Italian aggression was precipitated by the 1909 Italo-Russian rapprochement.\textsuperscript{22} The war demonstrated the intertwined challenge of saving the empire and modernizing it. One of Italy’s justifications had been its fear that the reforms would bond Libya to the Empire more closely, depriving Italy of an opportunity to annex it.\textsuperscript{23} It was during that war that the Ottomans made one of their futile attempts at allying with Britain.\textsuperscript{24} The war also demonstrated that Germany would not back the Empire regardless of the Kaiser’s many boastful claims.\textsuperscript{25}

The years 1908-1912 demonstrated that the Great Powers would not hesitate to sacrifice the Ottomans. In November 1910 Russia and Germany reached agreement on the Baghdad Railway’s route in Anatolia, in which Germany

\textsuperscript{12} Harry N. Howard, \textit{The Partition of Turkey: A Diplomatic History} (New York: Howard Fertig, 1966), 19.
\textsuperscript{13} Aksakal, \textit{The Ottoman Road to War}, 58.
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., 58-59.
\textsuperscript{16} Ahmad, “The Late Ottoman Empire,” 12-13.
\textsuperscript{17} Aksakal, \textit{The Ottoman Road to War}, 60.
\textsuperscript{18} Hew Strachan, \textit{The First World War: Volume: To Arms} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 663.
\textsuperscript{19} Aksakal, \textit{The Ottoman Road to War}, 59.
\textsuperscript{20} Kent, “Great Britain and the End of the Ottoman Empire,” 184.
\textsuperscript{21} Strachan, \textit{The First World War}, 661.; Aksakal, \textit{The Ottoman Road to War}, 77.
\textsuperscript{22} Howard, \textit{The Partition of Turkey}, 20.
\textsuperscript{23} Reynolds, \textit{Shattering Empires}, 32.
\textsuperscript{24} Ahmad, “Ottoman Empire,” 14.; Fromkin, \textit{A Peace to End all Peace}, 49.
\textsuperscript{25} Ludke, \textit{Jihad Made in Germany}, 39.
recognized a Russian sphere of influence in Persia.\textsuperscript{26} The railway, a project enthusiastically seen in Constantinople as a project that could help modernize the Empire, now looked like the very tool that would partition it. All the great powers were engaged in calculating their shares of the Asiatic provinces by drawing up spheres of influence.\textsuperscript{27} Moreover, German policy in this timeframe transformed from one which sought to preserve the Empire, to one which was willing to partition it.\textsuperscript{28}

Germany was also uninterested in an alliance with the Ottomans, despite the close relations the two countries had enjoyed since the 1890s.\textsuperscript{29} After the 1908 revolution, Germany initially fell from favour due to its association with the ancien régime.\textsuperscript{30} Berlin, however, continued to prove to Constantinople that she could, at times, be a reliable friend. For example, after being rebuffed by the French and British in 1910 while desperately seeking a loan, the Ottomans found reprieve in German assistance. Similarly, the Germans sold warships at a time when the British refused to do so.\textsuperscript{31} When the Ottomans approached Berlin for an alliance in 1912, however, they were quickly rebuffed.\textsuperscript{32} Similarly, Ottoman offers of alliance to Vienna in November 1909 were rebuffed.\textsuperscript{33}

The defeat in the Balkan Wars was a formative event for Ottoman policy. It had become clear to the CUP that the only path to international security was through an alliance with one of the alliance blocs. This consensus was only broken by disputes over who to ally with.\textsuperscript{34} After the Wars the Ottomans faced four foreign policy challenges: the Armenian reform project in Anatolia, the Aegean islands dispute, a loan agreement with one or more European governments, and the von Sanders affair. These challenges were all ‘life or death’ issues, and, notably, most emanated from the policies of the entente powers.\textsuperscript{35} The first risked the formation of a Russian protectorate, the second a war with Greece, the third bankruptcy, and the fourth partition. The impact of the Balkan Wars had an acute impact on the Ottoman leadership. Tellingly, despite losing much territory to Bulgaria, the CUP rapidly re-established relations with Sofia in the spirit of pragmatism, recognizing that the two countries had a common interest in revising the terms of the Treaty of Bucharest.\textsuperscript{36}

Unable to draw upon the protection of the great powers during the war, the Ottomans acutely felt their isolation. During the First Balkan War, a great power fleet had gathered in the Straits, threatening to occupy Constantinople in the name of protecting its minorities. The British had even suggested making Constantinople an international city and even the Germans had plans to land troops and set up an interim administration. What prevented these measures from happening, however, was the traditional obstacle: Russia would not acquiesce to anyone but the Ottomans or the Russians themselves occupying the Straits and Constantinople.\textsuperscript{37} Furthermore, During the Second Balkan War,
the great powers delivered a diplomatic note demanding the Ottomans cease all military operations, threatening the integrity of their Asiatic provinces if they refused. The great powers had also applied a double standard during the war. Just prior to the outbreak of the First Balkan War, in a collective diplomatic note they had declared that they would not recognize any territorial changes. In reality, however, they meant any territorial gains to the benefit of the Ottoman Empire. Furthermore, even the British, traditional guarantors of the Empire, flatly told Constantinople that they would not intervene to save Edirne.

The results of the Balkan Wars transformed great power perceptions of the Empire. Nowhere was this more evident than in Germany. Dismayed by the Empire’s evident weakness, Berlin was considering approaching its rivals to partition it. Berlin approached the British and reached agreement with them on the Baghdad Railway in 1913. Nevertheless, the Germans continued to invest in the railway, seeing it as a requirement for the establishment of a future protectorate in Anatolia. Even the Kaiser, long the Ottomans’ most vocal friend, changed his thoughts following the war. The Kaiser personally decorated the Greek King with military awards for his victory. During the war, the Kaiser secretly cheered on Greece on the principle of dynastic solidarity. The correspondence of the Kaiser during the war reflects the change in policy. In 1912 he declared that he would not interfere, saying he preferred a ‘free fight and no favor’ conflict. Moreover, when the war broke out, Berlin dispatched a naval squadron to the eastern Mediterranean in order to have forces to stake its claim(s) in the event of what they thought was the inevitable partition of the Empire.

The Balkan Wars also changed the view in London. By late 1912 the Foreign Office believed that the end of the Ottoman Empire was near and that they should not assist in preserving it. Nevertheless, cooperation continued unabated. In 1913 the British signed conventions on railways, navigational rights, and Mesopotamian oil. Tellingly, after the war, the British had placed their bets on Greece. As a result, they attempted to organize a great power naval demonstration to force the Ottomans to accept Greek sovereignty of the Aegean islands.

The Balkan Wars also changed the view in St. Petersburg. Russia was stunned by the pace and scale of Ottoman defeat. Since 1910 there had been a shift in Russian policy towards multilateralism. The goal was to preserve the Ottoman Empire until Russia was strong enough to unilaterally annex it. Additionally, the von Sanders affair deeply agitated Russia as it feared a dramatic alteration of the balance of power in the Straits. The Russians also feared the Ottoman naval buildup. Moreover, Russia was in the awkward

38 Ibid.
39 Ibid., 78.
40 Ahmad, “Ottoman Empire,” 15.
41 McKale, War By Revolution, 39.
42 Ibid., 44-45.
45 Weber, Eagles on the Crescent, 10.
46 Aksakal, The Ottoman Road to War, 72.
48 Ibid., 38-39.
49 Miller, Superior Force, 161-162.
50 Reynolds, Shattering Empires, 72.
52 Ibid., 76.
53 Ibid., 80-81.
position of being unfavourable to a strong Ottoman Empire able to resist it, while fearing a weak Ottoman Empire that invited great power partition. The main source of contention between the Ottomans and the Russians throughout 1913 was Russia’s insistence on a reform program in eastern Anatolia – one that uncannily resembled the tragic Macedonian reforms program.

From the end of the Balkan Wars in October 1913 to the July Crisis of 1914, the Ottoman Empire sought to break out of isolation through alliance with a great power. The most pressing driver of such efforts, amongst the Empire’s many challenges, was the bitter Aegean Islands dispute with Greece. The Ottomans were engaged in a naval race with Athens, one which only escalated after the great powers declared that the islands must remain Greek. Moreover, in January 1913 the Unionists had retaken power and were desperate to save the Empire. What resulted was a fruitless and long diplomatic dance.

The first to be approached were the British in June 1913. They rejected the Ottomans they thought the Empire was simply too weak to be acceptable. In early 1914 the Ottomans approached Vienna for an alliance but heard a replay of the German line that the Empire should focus on reforms. In spring 1914 the Ottomans sought diplomatic support and alliance from Bucharest but were also rebuffed. Testament to Ottoman isolation, the Romanians even threatened intervention in any Greco-Ottoman war over the islands. Even Bulgaria proved evasive when approached for an alliance. Desperate, in May 1914 the Ottomans unsuccessfully sent a senior delegation to the Tsar’s summer retreat in the Crimea to offer an alliance. In early July 1914 a senior delegation also unsuccessfully visited Paris seeking French diplomatic support as well as an alliance. The only success the Ottomans found in their diplomatic dance was German approval of a Balkan alliance of the Empire, Bulgaria, and Romania under the Central Power’s aegis. But this never materialized. Inevitably, the uninterested and sometimes hostile stance of the entente powers to an alliance nudged Constantinople towards the Central Powers. By March 1914 all the European powers had firmly indicated that they would not support the Ottomans in the Aegean Islands dispute.

For the first half of the July Crisis, the Ottomans kept a low profile. By late July however, the Empire was still isolated and had been rejected by each of the entente powers. Nonetheless, the July Crisis and the possibility of great power conflagration seemed to offer the Empire reprieve from isolation. If they could convince a power bloc that they were useful they could gain the formal security commitment they so desperately desired. The chance of war breaking

---

64 Reynolds, Shattering Empires, 28.
65 Ibid., 41.
68 Ahmad, “Ottoman Empire,” 15.
70 Aksakal, The Ottoman Road to War, 84.
71 Ibid., 87.
72 Ibid.
73 Yasamee, “Ottoman Empire,” 234.
74 Bobroff, Roads to Glory, 93.
76 Aksakal, The Ottoman Road to War, 83.
77 Ludke, Jihad Made in Germany, 41.
78 Aksakal, The Ottoman Road to War, 46-47.
79 Yasamee, “Ottoman Empire,” 236.
80 Strachan, The First World War, 668.
81 Aksakal, The Ottoman Road to War, 13.; Reynolds, Shattering Empires, 107-108.
out, however, presented a dilemma. On the one hand, the war did not directly involve the Empire, and they were not ready for another conflict. On the other hand, it was unclear as to whether the Empire would be afforded the luxury of staying neutral. In 1914, most observers expected a short war that would decidedly revise the balance of power worldwide.\textsuperscript{72} As such, the Empire attempted in the first half of July to ally with the entente but was rejected by each of its members individually.\textsuperscript{73} As war approached, both alliance blocs sought the allegiance of neutral states, particularly Balkan states. As most potential parties to war sought territorial changes, they sought to ascertain who would be the winning camp. As a result, whoever ‘signed up’ first could demand a greater concession in the event of alliance victory. Moreover, the Ottoman decision was particularly important as it would determine who the Balkan states would align with.\textsuperscript{74}

The July Crisis thus made Austria-Hungary eager to tie as many Balkan powers to the Central Powers as possible. As such, it was Vienna that first raised the issue of the Ottomans joining the Central Powers with Berlin. On July 14 they made such a proposal only to receive Berlin’s immediate rejection. Berlin simply did not deem the Ottomans to be of utility in an alliance\textsuperscript{75} At around the same time, the Ottomans themselves also approached the Germans, only to be rejected on the spot.\textsuperscript{76} Undeterred, the Ottomans kept prodding the Germans and suggested that failing an alliance with the Central Powers, the Ottomans would ally with Greece.\textsuperscript{77}

Since approaches to the Entente had failed to deliver, on 22 July the Ottomans again approached the Germans. Having been rebuffed on 22 July, they sought to receive German diplomatic support in creating a Balkan alliance under the aegis of the Central Powers. This was unsuccessful due to Balkan politics.\textsuperscript{78} Sensing German anxieties, the Ottomans blackmailed them by stating that a failure to align with the Central Powers would push Constantinople into entente arms. This resulted in a rapid change in German policy.\textsuperscript{79} After Vienna had delivered its ultimatum to Serbia, the Kaiser personally overruled his foreign ministry’s rejection of the Ottoman alliance offer, fearing the empire would side with the entente.\textsuperscript{80} Fever pitch took hold of German statesmen as to the looming potential of Pan-Islam induced rebellions.\textsuperscript{81} Military necessity made the Ottomans suddenly appear to be a more attractive ally than before.\textsuperscript{82}

Within ten days of the Germans deciding that they wanted an alliance with the Ottomans, a treaty was signed.\textsuperscript{83} On 27 July, the Grand Vizier met the German ambassador and presented the terms of a ‘secret short-term German-Ottoman alliance directed against Russia.’ To the Ottomans, ‘short term’ meant duration of 7 years, underscoring their concern for long term security. Notably, they also stated the empire only sought protection from Russia.\textsuperscript{84} On 28 July a formal Ottoman alliance proposal was presented to Berlin.\textsuperscript{85} What came back from

\textsuperscript{72} Reynolds, Shattering Empires, 107.
\textsuperscript{73} Strachan, The First World War, 669.
\textsuperscript{74} Bobroff, Roads to Glory, 97.
\textsuperscript{75} Aksakal, The Ottoman Road to War, 94.
\textsuperscript{76} Weber, Eagles on the Crescent, 62.
\textsuperscript{77} Aksakal, The Ottoman Road to War, 95.
\textsuperscript{78} Ibid., 97.
\textsuperscript{79} Ludke, Jihad Made in Germany, 45.
\textsuperscript{81} McMeekin, The Berlin-Baghdad Express, 86.
\textsuperscript{82} Strachan, The First World War, 669.
\textsuperscript{83} Ludke, Jihad Made in Germany, 45.
\textsuperscript{84} Aksakal, The Ottoman Road to War, 99.
\textsuperscript{85} Hamilton and Herwig, Decisions for War, 161.
Berlin, however, demonstrated a different understanding. Berlin proposed a short term alliance with a duration determined by the length of the July Crisis. In effect, while the Ottomans sought a long-term security umbrella, the Germans sought a temporary short-term alliance. This single aspect was unacceptable to the Ottomans, and after much haggling, it was revised; setting the treaty duration at four years.

On 2 August, the Ottomans finally signed the alliance they had longed for. Just three days later, however, the Ottomans approached Russia with an alliance proposal that sought security and territorial revisions. By so doing, they sought to reassure Russia that the mobilization was not directed against it. Despite the initial off-hand rejection, Constantinople was unimpressed by the lackluster Entente offering(s). Instead of guaranteeing long term security, all the Entente offered was postponing their decision on the Empire’s fate. Nevertheless, between August 15 and 20, a series of proposals were exchanged between St. Petersburg and Constantinople of the issue of an Entente–Ottoman agreement. Remarkably, it was the British and French, not the Russians, who killed off the proposal. Neither country approved of the agreement’s terms. The key issues in dispute were the fate of the capitulatory regime and the nature of the security guarantee(s) the Entente would provide to Constantinople. Regardless, the Ottomans did not find the offer(s) remotely tempting and were aware through diplomatic intercepts that the offers were motivated by the desire to keep the Empire out of the current war.

Unable to find a better deal with the Entente, yet having committed to an alliance with Germany, the Ottomans found themselves engaged in a delicate balancing act. They hoped to delay their intervention until the war either ended or, at the very least, it became clear who was going to win. As such, they hoped to postpone for as long as possible and found excuse after excuse to maintain the neutrality they had declared on 3 August. The Ottomans even went so far as attempting to convince the Germans that Berlin’s interests would best be served by continued Ottoman armed neutrality, that is to say a mobilized yet neutral Empire. Remarkably, even the alleged war-hawk, the Minister of War Enver Pasha, used this reasoning in his discussions with German officials.

The Ottomans used their need of Bulgarian assistance as an excuse to delay entry into the war. On 7 August Bulgaria began discussing a treaty of friendship. This led to Ottoman hopes that they could form a neutral Balkan bloc and remain out of the war. This plan was, however, shut down by the Germans. On 14 August, the Empire told Germany that it could not intervene until Bulgaria did so. Finally, on 19 August the Ottomans signed a Treaty of Alliance and Friendship with Bulgaria but this did not oblige Bulgaria to enter the war until the Ottomans could obtain a Romanian guarantee of neutrality – something Bucharest was unwilling to provide. Yet on 6 August the Ottomans

---

87 Aksakal, *The Ottoman Road to War*, 100-101.
90 Bobroff, *Roads to Glory*, 106.
93 Howard, *The Partition of Turkey*, 100.
95 Aksakal, *The Ottoman Road to War*, 140.
97 Ibid., 244.
98 Ibid., 248
and Bulgarians had signed a secret treaty that was kept secret from even the Germans until December 1914. This was a mutual defence pact against other Balkan powers. Tellingly, the defensive nature of the alliance was not accidental. The Ottomans and Bulgarians had agreed that they should preserve mutual neutrality until the outcome of the war became more predictable.

Much has been written about the arrival of Admiral Souchon and the German warships to the Straits and their role in precipitating Ottoman entry into the war. However, much of this discussion overlooks the manner in which the Ottomans both created and used this situation to their advantage; irrespective of its final role in firing the first Ottoman shots of the war. Firstly, the arrival of the German ships originates from an Ottoman request for naval assistance on 1 August, before the treaty was signed. While the saga of the ships need not be recounted here, the Ottomans made the most of the escalaratory arrival of the ships to the Straits by pulling off a fait accompli behind the Germans’ backs by unilaterally announcing the fictitious sale of the ships to the Empire. More important, however, is the very fact that the Ottomans found in the arrival of the ships the opportunity for a unilateral revision of the 2 August treaty. Thus, on August 6, just before the planned arrival of the German ships, then being pursued by the British, the Ottomans presented the German ambassador with a revised treaty. Fearing the endangerment of the German ships to marauding British patrols, the German ambassador immediately accepted. As a result, the Empire was able to obtain treaty guarantees of tangible gains after the war and committed Germany to its post-war security.

As August progressed the Germans, now faced with reversals on all fronts, increased pressure on Constantinople to intervene. Fuelled by desperation and hope in the power(s) of Pan-Islam, the Germans began calling for immediate assaults on Egypt and the Caucasus. By 19 August, the Kaiser himself contacted Constantinople to demand Ottoman intervention. Yet the Ottomans, particularly Enver Pasha, made the most of the Germans’ desperation by making lists of materiel they required in order to assist Germany through military action and the fomenting of Muslim rebellion in the entente colonies, in addition to pointing out incomplete mobilization and the poor state of the Straits’ defences. These claims, however, were not all mere excuses. Having been severely defeated in the Balkan Wars and being in the midst of extensive reorganization, the Ottoman military was not remotely prepared for another war.

Throughout September the Ottomans continued to play for time while hoping that a rapid Central Power victory would emerge. In the meantime, however, testament to their motives for signing the alliance, the Ottomans used their new found freedoms to end the capitulatory regime. Facing empty coffers that would force demobilization, and desiring to get rid of the hated capitulations, on September 8 Constantinople unilaterally abrogated the

99 Edward J. Erickson, Ordered to Die: A History of the Ottoman Army in The First World War (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2001), 31; Trumpener, Germany and the Ottoman Empire, 34-35.
100 Akşakal, The Ottoman Road to War, 120.
101 Yasmine, “Ottoman Empire,” 239.
102 Hamilton and Herwig, Decisions for War, 164; Trumpener, Germany and the Ottoman Empire, 34-35.
103 Trumpener, Germany and the Ottoman Empire, 27-29.
104 Hamilton and Herwig, Decisions for War, 163.
105 McKale, War By Revolution, 52.
106 Akşakal, The Ottoman Road to War, 137-138.
107 Ibid., 135.
108 Erickson, Ordered to Die, 7-9, 16-18.
capitulatory regime and increased customs duties.\textsuperscript{109} So ambitious was this Ottoman undertaking that it managed to get all five warring great power ambassadors to present a joint diplomatic complaint.\textsuperscript{110} In a similar vein, the Ottomans made the most of their ability to request war materiel from Germany. With every German plea for intervention, the Ottomans managed to respond with an additional shopping list of equipment necessary to carry out such operations.\textsuperscript{111}

Throughout September the Germans continued their hassling of the Ottomans to intervene. In particular, they demanded the mining of the Straits, naval actions against Russia in the Black Sea, and attacks in the Caucasus, Suez Canal, and the Crimea.\textsuperscript{112} Cognizant that the Ottomans were playing them in hope that the war would end soon, the Germans tightened the proverbial noose around the alliance and threatened the Ottomans with a return to isolation. From September 10\textsuperscript{th} the Germans made clear that they would neither supply nor fund anything not required for the Suez Campaign until the Ottomans entered the war. Tellingly, Berlin refused to even supply more defenses for the Straits.\textsuperscript{113} This German change in policy provided the impetus for a gradual shift in Ottoman policy.\textsuperscript{114} Moreover, as September came to a close, it became clear that the Entente powers no longer considered the Ottomans to be truly neutral, as evinced by the British interception of Ottoman naval vessels.\textsuperscript{115}

Throughout October the Ottomans continued their delaying tactics until they realized that they risked forfeiting their long sought alliance. Faced with incomplete mobilization and empty coffers, the Ottomans faced ‘structural disarmament’ given imminent bankruptcy.\textsuperscript{116} The solution to this problem was found in Berlin. Cognizant of their financial plight and sensing German impatience, the Ottomans requested a large loan from Berlin to finance their ongoing mobilization. The Germans agreed, with the caveat that most of the funds would only be transferred after the Ottomans engaged in hostilities.\textsuperscript{117} As such, the arrival of German gold on October 16 and 21 eliminated the last plausible obstacle and excuse the Ottomans could utilize.\textsuperscript{118}

Having received approval for a loan from Berlin, on October 8 the Ottomans began reviewing their war plans. Testament to the nature of the alliance, the Ottomans forwarded their plans to the Germans for review.\textsuperscript{119} By now most of the CUP elite had come to realize that the alliance with Germany must be preserved at all cost as the Germans would no longer keep a non-combatant ally.\textsuperscript{120} Given their desire for long-term German assurances, the Ottomans in their quest for security were left with no choice but to enter the war.

On 27 October Admiral Souchon took the Ottoman fleet into the Black Sea.\textsuperscript{121} On October 29, the Ottoman fleet attacked Russian coastal targets in a surprise attack.\textsuperscript{122} The official explanation of the operation claimed that it was

\textsuperscript{110} Trumpener, Germany and the Ottoman Empire, 37-38.
\textsuperscript{111} McMeekin, The Berlin-Baghdad Express, 94.; Aksakal, The Ottoman Road to War, 148.
\textsuperscript{112} Truempener, Germany and the Ottoman Empire, 46.; Yasamee, “Ottoman Empire,” 251.
\textsuperscript{113} Aksakal, The Ottoman Road to War, 149.
\textsuperscript{114} Ibid., 154.
\textsuperscript{116} Strachan, The First World War, 677.
\textsuperscript{117} Ludke, Jihad Made in Germany, 47.; Truempener, Germany and the Ottoman Empire, 48.
\textsuperscript{118} Truempener, Germany and the Ottoman Empire, 51.
\textsuperscript{119} Aksakal, The Ottoman Road to War, 171, 173.
\textsuperscript{120} Ibid., 175.; Yasamee, “Ottoman Empire,” 254.
\textsuperscript{121} Yasamee, “Ottoman Empire,” 256-257.
\textsuperscript{122} Erickson, Ordered to Die, 35.
in retaliation to a ‘thwarted Russian attack’ on the Ottoman fleet. Nevertheless, the hostilities provoked a crisis in the Ottoman cabinet. Four ministers resigned in protest and a feeble diplomatic note was sent to St. Petersburg in hope of keeping the peace. Unsurprisingly, the note failed. On November 2 Russia formally declared war on the Empire. The following day, Franco-British naval forces attacked the Dardanelles forts, prior to declaring war, and, finally, formally declared war on the empire on November 5. On November 10 Constantinople itself declared war on the Entente and on the 14th, a jihad was declared by the sheykhulislam against the Entente powers.

In 1908 the Ottoman Empire was a desperate state attempting to reform its way to survival. Immediately, however, the ambitious CUP that took power that year found itself confronted with three foreign policy reversals of the first order. Seeking a way out of isolation and seeking security, the Ottoman Empire began a long quest for diplomatic companionship in the form of an alliance. Despite many failures in their attempts at courtship, the Ottomans finally found an opening in the July Crisis of 1914 to ally with Germany and the Central Powers. That diplomatic victory, however, while fulfilling the Ottoman desire for a long-term great power relationship and its associated security umbrella, required that the Ottomans intervene in yet another war. In response, the Ottoman Empire and the CUP sought to play a delicate balancing act, preparing for war but working hard to postpone entry in the hope that the war would end soon. When the Germans threatened to effectively terminate the alliance and the peace-time benefits it conferred, however, the Ottoman elite chose entry into the war over a return to strategic monogamy.

**Works Cited**


---

123 Aksakal, *The Ottoman Road to War*, 180.
124 Ludke, *Jihad Made in Germany*, 47.
126 Ludke, *Jihad Made in Germany*, 51.


Egypt Trade Relations with Near East during the Naqada Period

by Felipe Gonzalez-Macqueen

The paper seeks to understand the trading relationship between Egypt and the Near East during the final stages of the Egyptian Predynastic Period and what was the extent of the administrative power of the newly formed Egyptian centralized state in securing and fomenting trade routes to the Near East. By analyzing the material evidence from the sites of ‘En Besor, and Site H on the southern region of Canaan we compare and contrast different theories in regards to the involvement and capabilities of the state in trading missions with neighboring areas during the transition stage to the Dynastic Era.

Trade emerged when cultures developed a surplus from the resources available to them. Thanks to advances in technology and domestication cultures managed to trade with geographically distant places at a faster rate allowing cultures to obtain items not available in their regions. Trade in Egypt during the predynastic period and earlier times was conducted with nearby cultures along the Nile River for example but as time progressed, Egyptians ventured further away to areas like Nubia in the south, desert cultures from the west, and Sinai and Canaan to the east. But during the final stages of the predynastic period, Egypt started to unify itself as a single state. This change would impact almost all aspects of Egyptian life, especially involving trade. This essay will focus on the nature of trading relationships between Egypt and the Canaan region during the transition between pre-dynastic and dynastic periods by focusing on architectural evidence and material evidence from the site of ‘En Besor and Site H. Found on the southern region of Canaan, the site of ‘En Besor and Site H are located very close to each other. ‘En Besor was discovered in 1960 by Joe Yahezkel and Dan Gazit but was excavated by Ram Gophna from 1970 to 1983. Because of its geographical location as somewhat a middle point between Egypt and Canaan, the site is ideal to study trading relationships between Egypt and Canaan during this time period. Extensive amounts of work has been done on the site and a lot of material evidence has been published over the past twenty five years showing evidence from two areas (Site H and ‘En Besor) that were occupied during this transition.

Evidence for private trade

It has been argued that the trading relationship between Egypt and Canaan was one of “Freelance Middle Man Trading,” where Site H would have been the entry point of Egyptian objects into northern areas.¹ Harrison also explains that because Egypt’s political consolidation was not yet fully established that they wouldn’t have been able to allocate enough people and resources to effectively control the trade routes in their favor.² Because of this, the only viable way to effectively make trade profitable was through private enterprises

---

² Ibid., 90.
(merchants) who were completely free to do what they desired because of the lack of regulations placed at the time.

Evidence for this type of trade can be found on Site H near ‘En Besor which has been dated to the period shortly before the Naqada III or Dynasty 0 (maybe even as early as the Naqada II period). Evidence from this site point out to a small settlement that was later abandoned by Egyptians settled on the ‘En Besor site during the First Dynasty.

From the pottery found at the site we can see that there are some unusual mixing of techniques, forms and types of pottery. From the pottery in the site, we find variations from the traditional globular pot from the Naqada II period which has short necks and extremely everted rims to the point of being flat, but on the site we see some variation from the standard because pots now have larger and more prominent necks while still maintaining some degree of everted rims, but not as much as the traditional Naqada II pots (No. 4, 5, and 6). Pot No. 1 features a style most commonly seen on sites north of Site H while No. 3 seems to have few relatives in Egypt but a much more similar one was found in Lachish to the north of Site H. The Petrographic analysis performed explains that pottery was made in a variety of ways (1) with local style and materials, (2) Egyptian style and materials, (3) Egyptian styles with local materials, or (4) Egyptian’s version of local styles with local materials (51). The pottery evidence suggests that because of the mixing of styles and materials in this site that there should have been a fairly organic relationship between both trading parties in that neither one of them was particularly focused on maintaining some kind of cultural separation between them and that it was somehow allowed for both of them to start experimenting with each other’s styles to create something different. This style of trade relationship somehow weakened over time which led to the abandonment of Site H.

Evidence for state controlled trade

Harrison explains that trade relations shifted when trade routes started to become too profitable and Egypt became a unified state with a centralized government that realized this fact and started to create ways to benefit from them like the creation of regulation and taxes to generate revenue for the state. By effectively implementing these types of regulations, the amount of trade to this area and its revenue grew considerably. Several lines of evidence from the site of ‘En Besor show that there was a shift in practices and that these new practices were part of the series of new regulations imposed by the Egyptian state.

First of all we see that there is a change in settlement because chronologically, Site H was occupied during the Naqada II and III periods while ‘En Besor was used from the final parts of the Naqada III period and Dynasties I and II. The excavator also pointed out that Site H was abandoned before settlement in ‘En Besor started suggesting that the abandonment of Site H and the change of settlement might reflect a period of decay in private

---

1 Dan Gazar & R. Gophna, The Early Bronze I Settlement at ‘En Besor Oasis (Tel Aviv: Ramot Pub. House, Tel Aviv University, 1990), 51.
2 Ibid., 50-51.
4 Dan Gazar & R. Gophna, Excavations at ‘En Besor (Tel Aviv: Ramot Pub. House, Tel Aviv University, 1995), 15; Dan Gazar & R. Gophna. The Contacts Between ‘En Besor Oasis, Southern Canaan, and Egypt during the Late Predynastic and The Threshold of the Predynastic and The Threshold of the First Dynasty: A Further Assessment (Tel Aviv: Ramot Pub. House, Tel Aviv University, 1992), 264. First Dynasty: A Further Assessment (Tel Aviv: Ramot Pub. House, Tel Aviv University, 1992), 264.
trading relationships that was then reestablished by the central government.\textsuperscript{6} Additionally we need to point out that Egyptians didn’t settled in a new area strictly speaking, the evidence that will be presented comes from Stratum III which is termed as the “Egyptian Strata” because of the homogeneity of Egyptian style items in the site but, the earlier level (Stratum IV) was originally a Canaanite population that abandoned the area before Egyptians settled in.\textsuperscript{7}

Architectural evidence from ‘En Besor shows that on Stratum III, a building was erected most likely during Dynasty I. The structure was built with bricks made with local materials but with an Egyptian mindset. Excavators also pointed out that this type of mud brick was used for monumental structures during Dynasties I and II and that its placement and bonding also have traditional Egyptian characteristics.\textsuperscript{8}

\textbf{Figure 1. Reconstruction of the structure from ‘En Besor}

The structure was laid out on a north-south axis and because of subsequent periods of occupation by other cultures, the remains on the site allow us only to identify four rooms. Rooms A and B are both roofed rooms connected to each other and found on the western side of the building, they measure 3.5m by 1.75m and 1.75m by 2m respectively. Room D located east of Room A seems to have been twice as long as Room A and B combined while Room C, located to the south of the other three rooms was almost completely erased by constructions made on Strata II it can be interpreted as a roofless area with the exception of the northwestern corner which might had a roof. Excavators suggest that the building was made during the First Dynasty as a pit stop that could provide the essential supplies for traders coming and going to Egypt.\textsuperscript{9}

\textsuperscript{6} Gazit & Gophna, *Early Bronze*, 54.
\textsuperscript{7} Dan Gazit & R. Gophna, *The First Dynasty Egyptian Residency at ‘En Besor* (Tel Aviv: Ramot Pub. House, Tel Aviv University, 1985), 61.
\textsuperscript{8} Ibid., 67.
The pottery from Stratum III has been divided into 10 categories from which we will focus primarily on three types of pottery quite different from each other in almost every aspect.\textsuperscript{10} Traditional cylindrical jars are characterized by having flat bases, straight bodies and everted rims. In the site, these general traits are also seen on the sherds but three types of variation have been distinguished. (1) A rim with a band of scallops, (2) vessels with thick and polished walls with a yellowish-beige outer surface with a black line that has been speculated to be a \textit{serekh} graffito. (3) Jars with thin walls with a thin impressed line below the rim, sometimes resembling a chord (81). Petrographic analysis indicates that cylindrical jars were mostly produced in Egypt and that they were then transported to this area most likely transporting items like cheese or perfumed oil (81). This type of jar is very similar in style and material used to those found in Egypt from Dynasties I and II classified as “Wavy-Handled Jar,” as shown in figures 2 and 3.\textsuperscript{11} Also, the depiction of chord-like lines below the rim might have been a precursor to a more traditional style or chord patterns in pottery which are also associated with trade because it has been argued that the chord lines on a jar might have been a guide to how to properly tie the jar when transporting it.\textsuperscript{12}

Evidence of Jars from this stratum consists solely on rim and base sherds that have been separated by size into four categories which are here summarized into two categories:

- Large jars: thick rims with everted lips that were possibly used to carry water, food, wine, or other commodities. Some times sealed with clumps-like caps of mud.
- Small jars: consists of most of the shards found. They were globular and squat with a thick and everted rim. Some have flattened bases while others have pointed ends. They were used to carry luxury goods and cosmetics in low quantities.

\textbf{Figure 2, Example of "Wavy-Handled Jar" cylindrical jar from Dyn I-II, Egypt.}

\textbf{Figure 3, cylindrical jar type from the site of ‘En Besor.}

\textsuperscript{10} Dan Gazit & R. Gophna, \textit{The Egyptian Pottery of ‘En Besor} (Tel Aviv: Ramot Pub. House, Tel Aviv University, 1990), 71-88.
\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., 87.
In general, some of the jars were made in the area while the rest was made in Egypt and then brought to this area (mostly associated with those jars that were sealed for transportation). Overall, the jars were not as important as the cylindrical jars in the sense that they were allowed to create more out of regional materials with more chance to experiment, in the sense that some of the sherds even had graffiti in them.\textsuperscript{13} Nonetheless, some of the jars made in Egypt were likely filled with precious commodities from Egypt, making them moderately appreciated in comparison to the cylindrical jars.

Finally, Holemouth Jars (Figure 4) are rounded with extremely inverted rims which break the common theme seen on the rest of the pottery where rims have been mostly everted. Petrographic analysis suggests this type of jar is Canaanite and would be the only non-Egyptian style of pottery adopted in this stratum. Holemouth jars seem to have been used for everyday domestic activities and not trade.\textsuperscript{14}

Aside from the pottery from the site, another indicator of state controlled trade can be interpreted from the large amount of seal impressions found in the same strata which were correlated to several kings from the first dynasty.\textsuperscript{15}

\textsuperscript{13} Gazit & Gophna, \textit{Egyptian Pottery}, 84.
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., 86.
These findings could indicate that people were stationed in places like ‘En Besor to perform some regulation tasks. Although the exact job of the officials in this site is still debated, it alludes to the idea that the state could now afford to start sending officials to these removed places to control the trade that comes and goes through the site.\textsuperscript{16}

\textbf{Analysis of Evidence}

We can make some inferences about the trading relations with Canaan. Ram Gophna argues the placement of the site would have allowed Egyptians to control water resources nearby and that the architecture found at ‘En Besor would then point out to a permanent or close to permanent occupation of this site.\textsuperscript{17}

\textbf{Reasons to consider ‘En Besor as part of a state controlled trade route}

1. Geographic location makes this area ideal to establish settlements for passing caravans to resupply with the necessary items to continue the trade route.
2. The evidence of \textit{serekhs} indicate that a centralized power was already established in Egypt and they were most likely using their resources to ensure that trade worked properly.
3. Architectural evidence supports the idea that Rooms A and B could have worked as office and private quarters for an official, while the large open spaces of Room's C and D may have been used to rest and resupply caravans in transit.
4. Material evidence from the site indicates that the whole of Stratum III as an “Egyptian Strata” was almost entirely influenced by Egyptian style with the exception of whole-mouth pottery. This could imply that there was a high degree of separation between indigenous cultures nearby and the Egyptian trade settlement because of the lack of cultural interaction.
5. The material evidence points to two types of workers in the site. The first would be a state sanctioned official who with their seal impressions would verify that trading worked properly. The second type would be the common worker who would have been here making all sorts of pottery for household and everyday use while also making more highly appraised objects as well and doubling up their work load as helpers to resupply passing caravans with necessary equipment.

From the evidence shown above we can explain trade was originally a private enterprise without involvement of the state that might have had some interaction with the nearby cultures seen on the amount of experimentation on Site H. However, as time progresses and Egypt becomes a unified state, we start to see a change in this relationship. Looking at the abandonment of Site H and Strata IV ‘En Besor, trade seems to disappear from the area suggesting a change in the relationships. We then start to see a resurgence of trade in the area by looking at the establishment of ‘En Besor (Stratum III). This resurgence in trade might have also been helped by the role that the government could have been taking in order to profit from these trade routes. By providing the area with a functional set of checkpoints to allow caravans to replenish their

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., 166.
\textsuperscript{17} Dan Gazit & R. Gophna, \textit{Egyptian Trading Posts in Southern Canaan at the Dawn of the Archaic Period} (Tel Aviv: Ramot Pub. House, Tel Aviv University, 1987), 258.
supplies for the road, the government made trading much more efficient and therefore everyone made more money out of it.

Under the points explained before we now have several theories for the level of importance that ‘En Besor must have had in a larger scale of trade routes. Although originally suggested that ‘En Besor would have been a focal point (or part of a focal area) which allowed Egyptian trade to be distributed northwards, the architectural evidence does not support this theory because the total space for the structure is too small for several caravans to be stationed here at once while they resupply and also there doesn’t seem to be any other kind of architectural feature from this strata which begs the question of where the Egyptian potters would be living if they worked in this area. With the same architectural evidence, the excavators have argued this site couldn’t have been much more than a small pit stop with not much trade passing, though enough trade to justify the construction of a pit stop. 18 Nevertheless, all the information points out that the state was involved in some degree in trade here. Yet there is another set questions in regards to the level of involvement of the state in the area.

Some scholars would argue about what the Egyptian state did to secure the trade routes in this period. Some have suggested a militaristic approach to explain that because we find evidence of serekhs in the area that Egypt completely dominated the territory and was considered to be part of the Egyptian state during the reign of Narmer and throughout First and Second Dynasties. 19 While the same scholar suggests that the reason we see evidence of serekhs so far away from mainland Egypt is because of the influence that this culture has in Canaan but that trade was conducted on an area that was deemed a “neutral” zone where merchants were allowed safe trading relationships (15). 20

Although these types of questions cannot be answered by looking at the evidence from one single site, some inferences can be made from the material found. Based on one single site, we believe the relationship here must have been that of a “neutral” zone because geographically speaking, this site is very far removed from the rest of what we consider traditional Egyptian territory, and therefore supplying this area with forces to defend it from other cultures would have been difficult during this early period. We also see no evidence of defensive mechanisms in the site (like fortification walls) or any sort of weapons that would influence and it would have worked as a “neutral zone” where sites like ‘En Besor would have worked as checkpoints created by the

---

18 Schulman, “More Egyptian Seal,” 166.
20 Ibid.
state as the only resource they were able to establish in the area and that the only role of these checkpoints was to inspect some of the trade with the help of their seals (like what a contemporary customs office does) and also help supply caravans with the necessary items to continue the road.

Figure 7, Seal impression from ‘En Besor

Conclusion

From the evidence presented before we see there was a change in practices. Although the reasons for these changes might not be completely clear from the archaeological record from the site, we can see enough material to suggest that a shift from private enterprise to state-sponsored enterprise occurred when Egypt became a unified state. Now, the evidence presented does speak to a level of involvement from the state, but this doesn’t imply that the state was running the trade relationships in the region. We would rather suggest that the lack of evidence for self-defense mechanisms, the relationships here were more open in the sense that Egypt had some influence in the region which was acknowledged by the nearby cultures. However, Egypt did not go towards larger efforts of annexation to include this region as part of the Egyptian state.

Illustrations


Works Cited


———. *The Early Bronze I Settlement at 'En Besor Oasis*. Tel Aviv: Ramot Pub. House, Tel Aviv University, 1990.


———. *The Contacts Between 'En Besor Oasis, Southern Canaan, and Egypt during the Late Predynastic and The Threshold of the First Dynasty: A Further Assessment*. Tel Aviv: Ramot Pub. House, Tel Aviv University, 1992.


Neorealism and the Bombing of the Osirak Reactor

by Carissa Beata

The Israeli raid on Iraq’s Osirak reactor marked the first instance in history in which a country successfully demolished the nuclear facilities of another. For several years, the ongoing development of the Iraqi nuclear programme had been of concern to Israel. In order to investigate the Israeli decision to execute the preventive strike, this paper will utilize the international system as the selected level of analysis. Given that Iran had, too, attempted to damage the Osirak reactor eight months prior to the Israeli attack, there emerges a suspected uniformity in the foreign policy operational codes of states within the international system. In examination of the Osirak bombing, this paper will apply the system-level theory of neorealism to the event at hand. I will begin by introducing the context of the Israeli raid. Subsequently, I will proceed to explain the preventive attack by means of the ordering principle of the international system, the character of the units within the system, and the distribution of capabilities among the units within the system. I will conclude with an overall assessment of the explanatory ability of the neorealist approach.

The Israeli raid on Iraq’s Osirak reactor in 1981 marked the first instance in history in which a country successfully demolished the nuclear facilities of another. For several years, the ongoing development of the Iraqi nuclear programme had been of concern to Israel. In order to investigate the Israeli decision to execute the preventive strike, this paper will utilize the international system as the selected level of analysis. As Singer describes, the system-oriented model offers a comprehensive view that encompasses the entirety of interactions within the international system. Given that Iran had, too, attempted to damage the Osirak reactor eight months prior to the Israeli attack, there emerges a suspected uniformity in the foreign policy operational codes of states, in accordance with Singer’s conception of the system-oriented analysis. To further our examination of the Osirak bombing, this paper will apply the system-level theory of neorealism to the event at hand. First, I will begin by introducing the context of the Israeli raid. Subsequently, I will proceed to explain the preventive attack by means of the ordering principle of the international system, the character of the units within the system, and the distribution of capabilities among the units within the system. Hence, I will conclude with an overall assessment of the explanatory ability of the neorealist approach.

Historical Context


---

reactor.\textsuperscript{2} Within a mere eighty seconds, each F-16 aircraft dropped two 2000-pound conventional bombs onto Osirak, successfully destroying the nearly completed nuclear facility.\textsuperscript{3}

In the aftermath of the attack, Iraq denounced the Israeli raid as a “premeditated act of aggression,” asserting that Osirak had been designed solely for peaceful purposes.\textsuperscript{4} Iraq substantiated their claim to have built their nuclear programme in strict accordance with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons of 1968 (NPT) with proof of its disclosure to the United Nations Systems’ International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards. Conversely, Israel adhered neither to the NPT nor to IAEA inspections.\textsuperscript{5}

In response to such allegations, Israel contended that the strike was a necessary act of national self-defense. Upon the unsuccessful attempt by the Islamic Republic of Iran Air Force (IRIAF) to obliterate Osirak on September 30, 1980, Saddam Hussein was quoted to have declared that the reactor was intended for use against “the Zionist enemy.”\textsuperscript{6} In his statement on June 8, Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin suggested that “[i]t was explicitly stated by the Iraqi ruler” that “[t]he goal for [the] bombs was Israel.”\textsuperscript{7} Israel firmly believed that the nuclear reactor needed to be destroyed before it attained full nuclear weapons capability, alleging that Iraq’s adherence to the NPT and IAEA inspections were mere facades through which such capability was strengthened.\textsuperscript{8}

In its assessment of the Israeli raid, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 487, which:

- Condemned the Israeli attack as a violation of the UN Charter and the norms of international conduct;
- Called upon Israel to refrain from repeating such acts;
- Recognized that the attack threatened the IAEA and thus the NPT;
- Confirmed a nation’s right to establish nuclear programmes for peaceful purposes;
- Called upon Israel to consign its nuclear facilities to the IAEA;
- Held that Iraq was entitled to reparation.\textsuperscript{9}

Upon consideration of the IAEA report of the nuclear facility, The Security Council accepted Iraq’s position that it had abided by the rules of the NPT, thereby rejecting Israel’s assertion of legitimate self-defense.\textsuperscript{10}

A Neorealist Approach

Ordering Principle of the System

The Israeli reaction to the Iraqi nuclear programme can be explained by first identifying the ordering principle of the international system. According to

\textsuperscript{4} McCormack, *Self-defense*, 16.
\textsuperscript{5} Ibid., 17.
\textsuperscript{6} Boudreau, “The Bombing,” 25.
\textsuperscript{8} McCormack, *Self-defense*, 17.
\textsuperscript{10} McCormack, *Self-defense*, 17.
Waltz (1979), neorealism discards reductionist principles that state there are direct connections between the distinctive characteristics of individual actors and the results of their actions.\textsuperscript{11} Alternatively, there exists a structural arrangement which imposes itself onto all units within the system, thus determining the outcomes of their interactions.\textsuperscript{12} The Israeli attack can henceforth be viewed as a result of structure of the international system.

Waltz claims that the ordering principle of the international system is that of decentralization and anarchy.\textsuperscript{13} Accordingly, international politics ensue in the absence of an all-encompassing sovereign authority. Although international organizations do exist, they are unable to act effectively unless they acquire state support.\textsuperscript{14} Such dependency was exhibited by the internal failure of the UN to establish Israel’s subjective security and to provide a platform for negotiation. Moreover, the internal failure of the IAEA safeguards regime to secure a commitment to the NPT demonstrated that institutional insufficiencies could be furthered by an external perception of the initial failure.

\textit{The UN}

Though the UN stands to be a largely inclusive international organization, its dominance in international politics is lessened by its reliance on the support of its constituent states. The UN was internally weak in two respects. First, it depended on the permanent members of the Security Council to ensure Israel’s security. As per Article 1(1) of the UN Charter, a principal “Purpose of the United Nations” is “[t]o maintain international peace and security.”\textsuperscript{15} In order to do so, Article 2(4) states that, as a “Principle of the Organization,” “[a]ll members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force.”\textsuperscript{16} However, Article 51 justifies the right of self-defense as an exception to Article 2(4), declaring that:

Nothing in the present Charter will impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defense if an armed attack occurs against a member of the United Nations, until the Security Council has taken the measures necessary to maintain international peace and Security.\textsuperscript{17}

Under Article 51, the right of self-defense can be exerted temporarily until the Security Council proceeds to effectively maintain international peace and security. Hence, it was, in part, the lack of success of the Security Council in functioning as a centralized system of collective enforcement that there was a need for Israel to partake in a unilateral action to ensure its own security.

Second, the UN could only establish a platform of negotiation with the support of the parties involved. In 1980, Israel attempted to maximize its security under the auspices of the UN by advocating for the General Assembly’s adoption of Resolution 35/147, which called for the “[e]stablishment of a nuclear-weapon-free-zone in the region of the Middle East.” Although the resolution “[u]rge[d] all parties... to tak[e] the practical and

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{11} Scott Burchill & Andrew Linklater, \textit{Theories of International Relations} (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1996), 91.
\item \textsuperscript{12} Kenneth Neal Waltz, \textit{Theory of International Politics} (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley Pub. Co., 1979) 50.
\item \textsuperscript{13} Ibid., 52.
\item \textsuperscript{14} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{15} Dan Reiter, “Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma,” \textit{The Nonproliferation Review} 12, no. 2 (2005): 356.
\item \textsuperscript{16} McCormack, \textit{Self-defense}, 116.
\item \textsuperscript{17} Ibid., 117.
\item \textsuperscript{18} Ibid., 108.
\end{itemize}
urgent steps required for the implementation of the proposal,” such steps entailed a contractual agreement that necessitated Iraq’s recognition of Israel’s statehood. According to Boudreau, Israel had two alternatives that should have preceded the raid: diplomatic negotiations with Iraq and entreaties under the UN. However, the latter option did not surpass the requirement in the first option that Israel be formally recognized as a state. The two internal weaknesses both stem from the anarchic structure of the international system and both contributed to Israel’s resort to a preventive attack.

The NPT and the IAEA Safeguards

Just as the influence of international organizations can be threatened by its constituent states, it can similarly be threatened by states external to its membership. With respect to the Israeli attack, the NPT and the IAEA safeguards regime were weakened in two ways: the threat of noncooperation by its member states and thus the lack of assurance of their nonproliferation toward its nonmember states, specifically Israel. The task of the NPT to secure a commitment to peaceful nuclear programmes relied on the safeguards regime of the IAEA. McCormack suggests that the safeguards regime could have proven the diversion of a substantial quantity of nuclear material, but was inadequate in its ability to make predictions regarding the state’s future intentions. Moreover, diverted nuclear material could only be detected by the IAEA after the fact, in which time the inspected state may simply have resigned from the NPT. Regardless of Iraq’s possible intentions, whether peaceful or non-peaceful, the IAEA was procedurally limited in its capacity to uphold the NPT.

Additionally, the recognition of the internal weakness of the NPT and the IAEA by Israel renders them externally weak. As US Senator John Glenn remarks, the Israeli strike exhibited “the first gigantic vote of no-confidence in the international non-proliferation regime, including the IAEA safeguards.”

Due to Israel’s skepticism in the ability of the IAEA to guarantee a commitment to the NPT, the two frameworks were externally weak and further damaged by the actual attack. By initiating the strike, Wilson asserts that Israel had “made a mockery of the international system.” As demonstrated by the failures of the UN, the NPT, and the IAEA safeguards regime to overpower states in an anarchic system, the neoliberal view that international institutions can mitigate conflict does not apply in our present case.

Character of Units in the System

Next, the Israeli attack can be attributed to the character of states within the international system. Under neorealism, the absence of a centralized overriding authority causes states to seek to enhance their positions of power relative to other states. Relative gains supersede absolute gains, thereby creating a zero-sum international system. Henceforward, the Israeli raid on Osirak can be explained by the disposition of states within a structure of anarchy, characterized by self-help and rationality.

20 McCormack, Self-defense, 72.
22 Wilson, “Nuclear Proliferation,” 10.
Self-help

According to Waltz, the principle of action in an anarchic system is that of self-help. The anarchic structure of the international system constrains each constituent state into pursuing security before all other functions. Thus, states are functionally similar as their behaviors are conditioned by their need for survival. In our present case, the anarchic system induced Israel to take unilateral action in order to ensure its own security. By destroying Iraq’s potential to become a nuclear power, Israel simultaneously increased its position of power relative to Iraq. Although we have thus far used the terms ‘power’ and ‘security’ interchangeably, herein lies a dispute between offensive realists who believe that states seek to maximize power and defensive realists who believe that states seek to maximize the lower threshold of security. Regardless of the distinction, the pursuit of self-help is a characteristic of states within the international system, instigating Israel’s decision to execute the preventive strike against Iraq.

Rationality

As per Allison’s rational policy paradigm, the Israeli attack against the Iraqi nuclear programme can be explained in terms of the purposive act of a unified national government. The strategic national policy of a state requires that it calculate the benefits of actions against their corresponding costs. Prior to the design of the Osirak raid, Israel reasonably determined that the benefit of impeding the Iraqi nuclear programme in the short run far outweighed the cost of international condemnation resulting from the execution of a preventive attack.

However, it is in examining the Israeli cost-benefit analysis that neorealism falls short as a theoretical tool. As Vandenbroucke asserts, “Israel embodies the memory of the holocaust; always present to the Israeli populace and their leaders is the thought that such a catastrophe could occur again.” The fear of another genocide was a uniquely Israeli perception that exaggerated the need to secure survival within the anarchic international system. As demonstrated by Israel’s attacks against Egypt in 1956 and 1967, the willingness to implement a preventive or preemptive strategy was embedded in the culture of Israeli decision-making. Such willingness was severely embodied by Begin, whose obsessive concern of an atomic genocide of the Israeli people often lead to “worst possible case” analyses of national security matters. Furthermore, Wilson submits that the Israeli attack may have been catalyzed by Begin’s desire to win the forthcoming elections. Thus, although the systemic desire to maximize security played a basic role in Israel’s rational decision to attack the Iraqi facility, unit-level characteristics may have amplified such desire. The neorealist approach renders the systemic structure of the international system to be overly deterministic, neglecting the influence of societies, governments, and decision-makers in conflict decision-making. Although the characteristic rationality of a state within the international system can broadly explain the

24 Waltz, Theory of International Relations, 64.
25 Burchill & Linklater, Theory of International Relations, 91.
27 Ibid., 693.
31 Wilson, “Nuclear Proliferation,” 11.
Israeli raid, a consideration of unit-level components may aid in establishing a causal connection.

**Distribution of Capabilities of Units in the System**

Lastly, the Israeli decision to execute a preventive attack against Iraq can be accounted for by examining the distribution of capabilities between the states involved. Although states are functionally similar in their pursuit of self-help, they range in their capabilities. As Waltz describes, the relative distribution of power across states continually changes. The development of a nuclear facility in Iraq shifted the distribution of power comparatively away from Israel and toward Iraq, thereby strengthening the security dilemma and presenting Israel’s pursuit to maintain a balance of power in the region.

**The Security Dilemma**

Israel’s decision to preventively attack Iraq, in other words, to defect, can be demonstrated by Rousseau’s Stag Hunt. Its ordered preferences are the following: cooperate (CC), attack a peaceful Iraq (DC), attack a non-peaceful Iraq (DD), or not attack a non-peaceful Iraq (CD). The absence of an international sovereign to enforce international laws encourages each state to defect unless there is certainty that other states will cooperate. Due to the ambiguity of the Iraqi nuclear programme, the rational choice for Israel was to defect and attack the Iraqi facility.

Moreover, the security dilemma arises as one state’s increase in security inadvertently decreases the security of others. As Jervis explains, in the Stag Hunt, the incentive to cooperate increases with a decrease in the costs the state will pay if he cooperates and the other does not. Likewise, the incentive for Israel to defect increases with a rise in the costs it will pay if it did not engage in a preventive strike while Iraq continued to build its nuclear programme for presumably non-peaceful purposes. Since Israel’s small geographic size and concentrated population render it to be easily destroyed, it had greater reason to preventively strike first. Without defensible borders, a large size, and protection against sudden attack, Israel was distinctively burdened by Iraq’s increase in security.

Furthermore, the security dilemma was intensified as a result of two factors: non-distinguishable defensive and offensive weapons and the advantage of the offense. According to Jervis, the distinction between defensive and offensive weapons allows a state to increase its own security without threatening others. Because the nature of Iraq’s nuclear programme was ambiguous, Israel was able to impose onto it its own fear that the programme was of an offensive nature. Additionally, Israel’s offensive position had unequivocal advantage over its defensive position since it was easier to strike the Iraqi facility rather than to defend itself in the wake of an attack. In consideration of the security dilemma induced by the distribution of power within the international system, the Israeli decision to attack Osirak was reasoned.

---

32 Burchill & Linklater, *Theories of International Relations*, 92.
33 Waltz, *Theory of International Relations*, 57.
34 See appendix A
37 See appendix B
40 Viotti & Kauppi, *International Relations Theory*, 52.
Balance of Power

As a result of the anarchic structure of the international system, states seek to establish security by diffusing power from the grasp of any one state. Waltz states that “balance of power politics prevail wherever two... requirements are met: that the order be anarchic and that it be populated by units wishing to survive.” In opposition to Kissinger’s emphasis on voluntarism, the balance of power is viewed by neorealist as an inevitable attribute of the anarchic international system. With the growing threat of an advancing Iraqi nuclear programme in the Middle East, both Iran and Israel initiated preventive strikes in order to prevent the ascendency of a sole dominant power. However, the balance of power that politics spontaneously ensue because of structural anarchy is criticized by volunteers who believe that statesmen influence balance of power policies. Although an analysis of societies, governments, and decision-makers could complement our system-level analysis, the neorealist approach nevertheless succeeds in largely identifying how state action is influenced by the systemic distribution of capabilities.

Conclusion

By examining the ordering principle of the international system, the character of units within the system, and the distribution of capabilities within the system, the neorealist approach explains on a systemic level why Israel executed a preventive strike on the Iraqi nuclear reactor in 1981. Yet, the system-oriented model may overstate the influence of the system by disregarding the possible impact of societies, governments, and decision-makers in conflict decision-making. Specifically with respect to the present case, Israel was presumably unlike other states within the international system in that it was uniquely threatened by a second extermination of its people and formerly lead by a paranoid statesman awaiting elections. Critics of the neorealist approach may further urge that the portrayed determinism of state action therefore renders the Israeli preventive attack more justifiable than is deserved. But just as domestic law does not free actors from liability due to the large impact of social conditions on individuals, international law does not free actors from liability due to the large impact of systemic conditions on states.
Appendix A

Works Cited


Egyptian Letters to the Dead

by Jennifer Green

The letters to the dead are a specific genre of texts from ancient Egypt. These texts are letters written from living individuals to their deceased ancestors, which provide a unique glimpse into the personal beliefs of everyday Egyptians about the afterlife and the nature of human relationships beyond the grave. These letters prove that the Egyptians believed that memories, emotions, relationships, and even legal matters existed in the afterlife in the very same way that they exist on earth. This paper seeks to examine the evidence for Egyptian beliefs about the afterlife, and the connection which exists between the mortal life and the postmortual life. Rather than believing that the deceased were simply at rest, the Egyptians believed that the deceased were carrying on a form of everyday life, which could, and ideally would, intersect with their own. The deceased were petitioned for help in every day disputes, legal matters, and especially health concerns. These requests show that the deceased were more powerful and influential than mortal man, and that the deceased enjoyed a closer relationship with the gods and an increased privilege to ask for the gods' help on behalf of their relatives. Aside from providing assistance, it is also clearly evident that the deceased could also cause harm to those on earth.

The ancient Egyptian letters to the dead were letters written by the living to a deceased relative. The letters were usually written inside offering bowls or on papyrus, and placed inside the tomb with an offering to the deceased. It was intended that when the deceased's ka came through the false door and into the tomb to eat the funerary offerings, he or she would see and read the inscription. These letters were usually written because the living person was experiencing some manner of affliction that he believed the deceased person could resolve from the other side. Because these letters were intended to be read only by the recipient, they provide much more detailed, personal information about the lives and beliefs of the writer and recipient than is usually found in the formulaic inscriptions inside the individual tombs. The private information found in these letters reveals the personal beliefs that the ancient Egyptians held about the nature of the relationship between individuals in the mortal world and afterlife. These letters show that they believed that relationships and memories transcended the grave, that the living and deceased experienced a codependent relationship, and that the deceased were cognizant of, and able to influence, the daily affairs of the living.

Although relatively few inscriptions of this genre have been recovered, the letters that have been found span a wide enough time frame and geographical area to allow the conclusion that these letters were a common practice among the general public throughout most of Egypt's history. Even though the letters range in date from the early Old Kingdom to the New Kingdom, the basic pattern of the letters remains the same. The letters do not follow the standard formulaic pattern that is common in religious contexts, such as the “Address to
the Living” formula; rather, the letters follow an organic pattern contoured to the unique circumstance of each individual. The letters usually contain a greeting, a detailed account of why the author needs the deceased’s help, a reminder to the deceased that the author treated the person well during life and faithfully maintains the deceased’s mortuary cult, and a request or demand that the deceased help relieve their suffering or solve a problem for them. In the Kaw bowl from the Old Kingdom, a son addresses his parents and asks their help to settle a legal matter involving both the living and the dead.¹ A papyrus from Nag el-Deir dated to the 9th or 10th dynasty concerns a son warning his late father about their deceased servant, who is haunting him in his dreams.² On the Chicago jar stand, which dates to the First Intermediate Period, a son writes to his father asking for a son to be born to him and for his wife’s sicknesses to be cured.³ Also from the First Intermediate Period is a letter on a stela, where a husband asks his deceased wife to appear to him in a dream.⁴ From the early 12th dynasty is a letter from a wife to her late husband, asking him to intervene on behalf of their sick servant girl.⁵ In the letter from Papyrus Leiden, dated to the 19th dynasty, a husband writes a very emotional letter to his wife, asking her to stop causing him pain because she is wrong to do so.⁶ Each of these letters presents us with a different specific situation, but contain the same common themes; these common elements are evidence of a belief system governing interactions between the living and the deceased.

It is clear that the Egyptians believed that memories, feelings, and relationships stayed with the person after death. In the Kaw bowl from the Old Kingdom, a son writes a letter to his mother, telling her to recall a time when she said: “You shall bring me some quails that I may eat them,” continuing to say how he brought her the requested quails.⁷ The fact that a son is expecting his mother to be able to recall such a specific event is evidence of the belief that all the memories acquired during mortal life continued into the afterlife. Similarly, love and relationships were expected to continue after death. In a letter from Merirtifi to his deceased wife, Nebitef, he says: “Look, I am your beloved on earth, (so) fight for me, intercede on my name!”⁸ Merirtifi expects his wife to still love him and be concerned with his earthly welfare. Sometimes, however, the deceased might remember all too well how the living had treated him or her during life, and choose to cause the living individual pain, rather than to bring him or her relief. Papyrus Leiden tells such a story, in which a husband believes his late wife, Ankhiry, is torturing him because of the circumstances of her death. Her husband says that he was a good husband to her during her lifetime, even though he was away working for Pharaoh when she became sick and succumbed to her illness.⁹ He says that although he did everything possible to provide for her funeral, and grieved openly with his friends when she passed, that she is punishing him by not “letting [his] mind be at ease.”¹⁰ This shows that love, as well as heartache, was felt from individuals

---

⁴ Ibid., 215.
⁵ Parkinson, *Voices from Ancient Egypt*, 143.
⁷ Ibid., 212.
⁸ Parkinson, *Voices of Ancient Egypt*, 142.
¹⁰ Ibid., 217.
in both worlds. The husband appears tormented with guilt at not being by his wife's side when she needed him the most. He also seems to be accusing his late wife of feeling hurt, anger, and resentment towards him for not being there to take care of her. The letter provides us with a time frame, saying that it has been “three years” since her death.\footnote{Ibid.} This detail enables us to envision a man who has been grieving the loss of his wife for three entire years, and who has felt that she has been punishing him the entire time for not being there with her in her final moments. Throughout this process, he comes to the conclusion that he does not deserve to be tormented by her any longer, and writes to her to convince her to let his heart be at peace. This interaction shows us that the Egyptians believed that the dead and the living were very much a part of each other's lives, whether those lives were in the mortal or postmortal realm. The heartache of a deceased relative could cause the living similar heartache or other discomfort. This emotional closeness that seems to be maintained despite the separation of worlds shows us that the Egyptians did not truly see the living and the dead being separated by a sharp divide; instead, perhaps they were separated merely by a door, which both parties were able to open and call out to the other from.

Beyond simply believing that the deceased still knew and loved the living while in the afterlife, the Egyptians believed that the deceased could visit, or even haunt, them in dreams. In the letter from Merit this to his wife, he asks, “May you appear for me as a blessed one before me, that I may see you fighting for me in a dream.”\footnote{Parkinson, Voices of Ancient Egypt, 142.} Aside from asking her to fight for him so that his illness will be cured, he asks for confirmation that she has received his message and is fighting for him by means of seeing her do so in a dream. A letter from a son, Heni, to his father, Meru, suggests that he has already had a dream in which he saw deceased individuals. He writes to his father, saying that he saw him and their deceased servant, Seni, together in a dream.\footnote{Ibid., 144.} Heni writes to convince his father of his innocence concerning whatever caused Seni's demise, and to warn his father to “beware of [Seni]” until Seni has stopped causing him to dream about them.\footnote{Ibid., 145.} This confirms that Egyptians not only had the hope of their loved ones intentionally contacting them through dreams, but in fact believed this actually occurred. The idea that the Egyptians could communicate between the worlds is further evidence of their belief that death was only a passage into another world, where life and love continued on as they had in this life.

The letters to the dead provide insight into the “quid pro quo” that existed between the living and the dead. When a person died, the family members provided all of the appropriate funerary offerings and burial provisions needed for their loved one to have a safe journey into the afterlife. Continued visits to the person's tomb were necessary to provide additional food offerings for the deceased. In addition to the funerary arrangements and mortuary cult, the “Address to the Living” inscription was usually written outside the tomb or on a stela nearby the tomb, which requested that passers-by recite a formulaic spell which would provide the deceased with sustenance in the afterlife. The letters to the dead show that the living relatives believed that the deceased were indebted to them for performing these rites, and expected them to watch over
and protect them in return. In the letter from Merirtifi to his wife, he says, “I have not garbled a spell before you, while making your name to live upon earth.”¹⁵ This line tells us that the Egyptians actually did recite these spells on behalf of the dead and truly believed they were necessary for the survival of the deceased in the afterlife. Furthermore, this emphasizes the fact that the deceased needed the living in order to have a peaceful afterlife, and as such should watch over the living in return for their good deeds. Other letters take a slightly more pressing tone, saying, “Attention a million times! It is profitable to give attention to one who cares for you.”¹⁶ This is the author’s way of reminding the deceased that he needs them and, therefore, needs to pay attention to what he is asking for in the letter. Another letter more directly states that the living will give the dead more offerings if she does what he asks, saying that after she comes before him in a dream, he “will then deposit offerings for [her].”¹⁷ These exchanges show that the offerings to the dead were not merely an act of veneration or done out of a sense of religious duty, but were a way to continue nourishing a mutually beneficial relationship that transcended both worlds.

The main purpose of these letters is to provide a request that the deceased help the writer, or the writer’s loved one, to overcome a disease or other affliction that he or she is currently suffering. These requests directly imply that the living believed that the deceased could cause suffering of their own accord, or cause other deceased persons or demons to hurt the living. In the Cairo bowl, a woman writes to her dead husband on behalf of her sick servant, asking him to fight for her.¹⁸ Here there is no accusation that the husband is causing the girl’s illness, but the writer’s demands show that she believes that her husband can stop “any man who is doing her harm, and any woman who is doing her harm.”¹⁹ In the Kaw bowl, the author, Shepsi, asks his mother, “is it in your presence that I am being injured so that my children are disgruntled and I, your son, am ill?”²⁰ In this letter, the author is not sure who is causing his suffering, and is asking his mother if she is aware of what is happening to him and his family. Interestingly, he does not ask her to stop the one who is causing him pain if she is aware of it, but he does remind her that if he is injured and his children are upset, that “who, then, will pour out water for you?”²¹ In the letter from a husband to his wife, Ankhiry, it is very clear that he believes that she is the one who is causing his pain. He questions her, saying “what have I done against you wrongfully for you to get into this evil disposition in which you are?”²² He claims to be undeserving of the pain he is causing her and orders her to stop tormenting him. These letters were not written simply to express feelings or communicate the routine matters of the day; rather, they were prompted by an immediate need for intervention, usually for an illness that the author had been suffering for some time.

Although the deceased relative has passed on into the next life, the family members left behind still firmly believe that the deceased has a vested interest

---

¹⁵ Ibid., 142.
¹⁶ Wente, Letters from Ancient Egypt, 212.
¹⁷ Ibid., 215.
¹⁸ Parkinson, Voices of Ancient Egypt, 143.
¹⁹ Ibid.
²⁰ Wente, Letters from Ancient Egypt, 212.
²¹ Ibid.
²² Ibid., 216.
in his family's life. This again speaks to their belief that death was only a doorway into another world, where the person's memories and feelings continued as they had on earth. In the Cairo bowl mentioned above, the writer tells her husband that he needs to protect their servant because she is the one who holds their household together. The wife says that “if there's no help from you, your house’ll be destroyed,” but if he saves her, then “your house and your children shall be established.” Although the wife is supplicating him for help because of her own concern for the servant girl, her household, and her children, she is also appealing to her husband's desire to have his household and reputation maintained on earth. This implies that the dead are expected to still care for not only their living relatives, but also the daily aspects of their relatives' lives. Although the writer is alive and the recipient is deceased, it appears that they think of the difference between life and death more like two people living in different cities, who write back and forth about their daily lives and request support, rather than perceiving an impassable barrier separating the two worlds.

The Egyptians believed that the mortal life and afterlife were so inseparably intertwined that they could even take legal action against the deceased. In the Kaw bowl from the Old Kingdom, a son, Sheps, addresses both his mother and father in separate letters. In the letter to his father, he describes how he believes his deceased brother is causing him harm, even though he has done nothing to deserve it. He tells his father that “now that he is with you in the same city (of the dead), you must institute litigation with him since you have witnesses at hand in the same city.” This request shows how a living son is asking his deceased father to go to court to solve a dispute between him and his dead brother, who is causing him to lose his fields in the mortal life. This also expresses the idea that the living and the dead are valued as equals, and that the affairs of the mortal life and the afterlife are considered equally important; supposedly the brother is so upset that he is causing Sheps to lose his fields in the mortal world, and Sheps is so upset at the wrongdoing that he is asking his father to go to court, along with other deceased witnesses, to resolve this dispute.

Another example of using legal action to resolve a conflict between the living and the dead is given in the letter from a husband to his wife, Ankhury. In this letter, the husband is clearly distraught because he believes his deceased wife is “not letting [his] mind be at ease.” He starts his letter by saying “I shall content at law with you in the presence with the words of my mouth, that is, in the presence of the ennead of the West, and it shall be decided between you and [me through] this letter because a dispute with you is what I've written about.” This shows that his intent in writing this letter is to state his case that his wife is unjustly causing him emotional pain so that the gods will judge between them and presumably cause her to stop, if they rule in his favor. In order to prove his case, he lists all the ways he was a good husband to her in her lifetime, did everything he could to take care of her once she was ill, and gave her the best funeral he could upon her death. He is not as specific when he

21 Parkinson, *Voices of Ancient Egypt*, 143.
24 Ibid.
26 Ibid.
27 Ibid., 217.
29 Ibid., 216.
accuses his wife of wrongdoing; besides saying that she is not letting his mind be at ease, he only says that she is “laying hands on me even though I committed no wrong against you” and that she is “disregarding how well I have treated you.”

He says that he is “writing to make you aware of the things you are doing,” even though he does not specifically state what she is doing to him. He focuses on his innocence and lists everything that he has done right, rather than listing everything that she is doing wrong. This seems to indicate that he believed that the gods knew what was going on between the couple, so that he did not have to list specific occasions where he knew she had caused him to suffer; but in order to strengthen his defense, he lists specific things that show his character so that the gods will favor him.

In the first letter written by Shepsi, he is asking his father to initiate litigation against a deceased individual because of real events that took away his legal inheritance in the mortal life. This letter seems to have a legal basis because it is predicated on a legal inheritance from father to son in the mortal world. The idea that the gods would enforce a legal contract beyond the grave shows that they believed that the gods considered the living and the dead to be equally important, and held to the same moral and legal standards. The gods would not stand by and allow an angry akh spirit to cause a law to be broken on earth. In the second letter received by Ankhiry, the author warns her that he is asking the gods to decide their case, which is based purely on the emotional torment that she is causing him. This shows that the Egyptians believed that the gods cared about the happiness and well-being of both the living and the dead, and enforced an ethical standard in addition to a legal one. Even though the deceased had been judged for his actions in life and had been permitted to enter the afterlife, he was not allowed to act unjustly without receiving consequences for his actions. These letters involving court cases are evidence that the gods were believed to be superior to the living and the deceased, and still required the spirits in the afterlife to act ethically and morally.

Aside from the belief that the deceased can cause or relieve suffering, the Egyptians believed the dead could grant other requests as well. On the Chicago jar stand, a son writes to his father with several requests. He first quotes a man named Idu, who said concerning his son, “As for what may be in store in the beyond, I won’t let him suffer from any affliction.” He then asks his father to “please do the like thereof for me.” This shows that even though the Egyptians did not know for certain what would happen in the afterlife, they knew they would have the ability to protect their loved ones from any type of suffering. Furthermore, this quote shows that the people talked about what they would do in the afterlife and planned to influence their relatives’ lives from the beyond. He then makes the unusual request of asking his father to allow a healthy son to be born to him, and for a second son to be born to his sister. The only insight given as to why he believes his father has the ability to grant him a son is that he is “an able spirit.” Perhaps because the deceased had been judged and found worthy to live in the afterlife as an akh spirit meant that he was more able to approach the gods and ask for blessings to be given to his

29 Ibid., 216-217.
30 Ibid., 216.
31 Ibid., 213.
32 Ibid.
33 Ibid.
34 Ibid.
living descendants. Maybe the son had already petitioned the gods for a child without success, and hoped that somehow his father's influence would help sway the gods in his favor. The author adds in his letter, “may the Great One favor you and the face of the Great God be kindly disposed toward you.” This implies that his father would be asking the god on his behalf, and that he hopes the god will look favorably on his father's request. Although it is impossible for us to deduce solely from this letter exactly how the son expected his father to give him and his sister children, it is clear that he had faith that his father would be able to do so.

He continues on to ask his father to “confound” two maidservants who are causing “Seny to be afflicted.” He also asks his father to “banish...whatever afflictions are directed against my wife, whom you know I have need of.” The author seems to be as specific as possible when he knows the details of the situation. He specifically names the two servants who are hurting Seny and asks his father to stop them. When he does not know who or what is hurting his wife, he still implores his father to banish her afflictions. This suggests that the author believes that his father will be able to discover the source of his wife’s suffering and resolve it. This letter exemplifies the belief that the deceased were capable of doing more in the afterlife than mortals could do in this life. The deceased were believed to have more knowledge and have more influence with the gods than the living.

A study of the letters to the dead reveal a great deal about the nature of the afterlife, beyond what works such as the Book of the Dead can give us. These letters show that the Egyptians believed that individuals carried on their memories, emotions, behaviors, and relationships beyond the grave. The dead were still very much alive and active in the afterlife, and exerted their influence to impact the lives of their living relatives. The gods watched over the living and the dead simultaneously, and settled disagreements between the two in a divine court. The deceased had the ability to cause pain, as well as to protect the living from the influence of other unhappy spirits or demons. Most importantly, the ability to write these letters left the living Egyptians with a great sense of comfort that their loved ones were never far away; death was just a doorway into another room, from which the deceased watched over and protected their loved ones in the mortal realm.

Works Cited


---

35 Ibid.
36 Ibid.
37 Ibid.