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**To what extent can the remains of a funerary feast inside of
a second dynasty tomb be used to explore the social aspects
of feasting in ancient Egypt?**

Hannah Wells – 1501862

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Abstract

Saqqara 3477 serves as an excellent example of a second dynasty funerary feast, and one of the few funerary feasts that provide archaeologists with a record of what the funerary feast may have looked like when it was first placed within the tomb. Not only is it positioned within a time period where the formulaic nature of ancient Egyptian religion had yet to fully develop, but geographically the tomb is also situated within an area that symbolised the barrier of life and death. Situated near Um el Qa'ab the tomb provides an insight into what ancient Egyptian funerary beliefs may have been like during the second dynasty of Egypt and also can help archaeologists to investigate the social nature of feasting within ancient Egyptian society. This dissertation will aim to discuss this topic, from the tomb of Saqqara 3477 to the more ephemeral nature of ancient Egyptian funerary beliefs and the effect they had on and place they had in ancient Egyptian society during the second dynasty of ancient Egypt.

Introduction

The main aim of this dissertation will be to discuss and to explore the connections between consumption and social and religious practice, using the example of Saqqara Tomb 3477 as a way of investigating the links between the different areas. Similarly, the objectives will firstly be to use the example of the second dynasty tombs at Saqqara in order to understand the connections that might exist between the funerary practices and the social practices of the ancient Egyptians. Secondly to attempt to use that understanding in order to investigate and compare any differences and similarities between the forms of consumption and the way that food was consumed by the ancient Egyptians and modern, western forms of food consumption, particularly concerning those that might be considered to be consumed under similar circumstances as those that were consumed at Saqqara during the Old Kingdom for example, during a wake or after a funeral. Finally, to be able to use the knowledge, and understanding from exploring the different connections both from the second dynasty tombs at Saqqara and from investigating the similarities and differences between modern day consumption and consumption in ancient Egypt in order to explore the wider connections between consumption and social and cultural practice within ancient Egypt.

In order to investigate the extent to which banquet remains of second dynasty tombs can be used to explore the social aspects of feasting in ancient Egypt this dissertation will make use of a number of different theories and methodologies. The first of the theories that will be used throughout the dissertation, largely as a means of exploring and discussing the greater overarching context and as a method of fitting the more focused areas into said context, is Structuralism. Structuralism originated as a literary theory (Scholes, 1974, p. 32) before it began to be used within anthropology (Hawkes, 1992, p. 41) as a way of understanding different cultures by taking each part of the cultures social practice and fitting it into the wider context that the culture and said cultural practices existed within (Culler, 2002, p. 39). Whilst some parts of Structuralist theory will not be used as intensively

throughout this dissertation, for example the idea of binary opposites (Mastin, 2010, p. 12), the way in which Structuralism can be used to explore smaller parts of a society by placing them within the wider context that existed at the time (Culler, 2002, p. 52), should prove useful when exploring the case study that shall be used. Another theory that will be used in order to help explore the social context of funerary feasting in ancient Egypt will be the concept of habitus and as an extension of this, practice. Originally described as a theory by Aristotle (Bourdieu, 1987, p. 14), habitus is a way of understanding the impact that society and the societies concept culture, and a prescribed way of doing things is taught at the hearth (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 23), at home to children who then proceed to act out these rules of society when they later leave the home (Bourdieu, 1987, p. 124). This extends into the way that people within the society practice these unspoken rules of society within their daily lives and is explored within Bourdieu's Logic of Practice (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 3). Whilst these theories are commonly used within a modern context, and like Structuralism, often used within anthropology as a way of understanding contemporary societies and the reasons that they function in the way that they do (Mastin, 2010, p. 15), they should prove to be useful in investigating the cultural practice and context behind the food that the ancient Egyptians were consuming during their funerary feasting at Saqqara in the second dynasty of ancient Egypt.

The second dynasty tombs at Saqqara are of interest to the topic, due to the way in which they originate from a period where it appears that there is a more fluid understanding of the acceptable offerings that should be placed in a tomb with a deceased person (Baines & Lacovara, 2002, p. 5). This is due to the way in which, some of the offerings, such as those of fish, that are placed within the tombs are such that are not mentioned in offering formulas at later dates. In favour of the formulaic, bread, beer, oxen, and fowl (Childe, 1945, p. 13). In the case of fish, it is possible that at certain times of the year the eating of fish was restricted for some people in later periods, and that as a consequence it may have become a food that was not associated with the deceased and the afterlife as a result (Ikram, 2011, p. 364). Within many of the second dynasty tombs at Saqqara there were examples of food being left as offerings for the deceased or being eaten as funerary feasts

with, or to honour the deceased (Leonard, Jr, 2000, p. 177). However, presumably due to the interference of tomb robbers in antiquity, many of the assemblages were broken and the contents of vessels mixed together and trampled, making it almost impossible to learn anything of substance about the way in which the food had been, or was intended to have been consumed (Leonard, Jr, 2000, p. 177). However, at Saqqara there was one tomb that stood out amongst the others, called Saqqara Tomb 3477 by the excavators, it belonged to a deceased woman about 60 years of age (Leonard, Jr, 2000, p. 178), and contained an untouched funerary feast assemblage that was very useful towards understanding the food that the ancient Egyptian people ate, and the way in which they might have eaten it, particularly as it was the first time that such an assemblage would have been able to be studied together, entirely from the single context (Leonard, Jr, 2000, p. 178). As a result of this, and as a consequence for the dissertation, Saqqara Tomb 3477 will be the main case study that will be used to explore the social aspects of feasting in ancient Egypt.

This dissertation will largely be based within the archaeology of the case study, combined with research of depictions contemporary to the time. However, due to the way in which the case study shall be examined, though the use of largely anthropological theory, archaeological method is not the only area from which information will be drawn. Throughout this dissertation there shall be varying difficulties and restraints related to the interpretation of the information being used. The first and foremost of these is due to the way in which the funerary feasting within the tomb of Saqqara 3477 may not be a true parallel to the way in which the ancient Egyptians ate during their day to day lives, and as an extension to this have little connection with the social structures of Ancient Egyptian society or the way in which the ancient Egyptian people lived their lives. Similarly, to this the theories that will be used within the dissertation in order to analyse and to discuss the social nature of funerary feasting are those based in the modern day study of modern, contemporary peoples, making drawing comparison to the peoples of Ancient Egypt difficult. However, it is for these reasons that tomb 3477 at Saqqara was chosen as the case study that will be investigated. This is due to the way that tomb 3477 exists during a period at which the ancient

Egyptians were yet to fully formalise their funerary beliefs. Particularly the beliefs as to the particular kind of offerings might be left for the deceased within the tomb, this ensures that the food that was left in tomb 3477 can be said to mimic more closely the food that the ancient Egyptians might have eaten within their day to day lives (Emery, 1962, p. 13), rather than an ideal meant for the perfect afterlife, or restrained by the constraints of later Egyptian funerary beliefs. Through the objective use of modern day theory, particularly those related to the understanding of the social structures of society, it should be possible to investigate the parallels that may exist between the two different states in the lives of the ancient Egyptians, that of the living world, and that of the deceased. Despite the use of modern day theory, by understanding the difficulties and constraints that their use implies, throughout the duration of their use, it should allow for a thorough and clear understanding of the social aspects of feasting within ancient Egypt.

Case Study Analysis

The second dynasty tombs at Saqqara were originally excavated by W.B. Emery, and largely consist of the burials of nobles, rather than those of kings (Emery, 1962, p. 16). This is due to the way in which in the second dynasty of ancient Egypt, the kings moved their burial ground away from Saqqara, where previous kings had been buried (Childe, 1945, p. 19). Without the monopoly of kingship, it became possible for the ancient Egyptian nobles, contemporary with those second dynasty monarchs, to be buried alongside the tombs of the previous kings (David, 1982, p. 14). This practice, of being buried close to the remains or the tomb of a monarch, continued into later periods with several of the pyramids at Giza being surrounded by the smaller tombs of lesser nobles (Parker-Pearson, 1982, p. 101). Presumably under the assumption that a physical closeness to the king at death, would transpose into a closeness in the life after death, possibly with the former king

being able to intercede on the deceased person's behalf within the afterlife (Spencer, 1982, p. 34). It is within this second dynasty period, that the specific tomb of Saqqara 3477 is located.

Belonging to a female noble, Saqqara 3477 is an example of a mud-brick mastaba tomb. Constructed from mud from the Nile river (Emery, 1962, p. 5). Mastaba are a structure that is built above a tomb, typically rectangular in shape and which in later periods formed the basis for the early pyramids, the step pyramid being the result of several mastaba built one on top of the other (Childe, 1945, p. 18). The tomb itself is also fairly typical for a mastaba tomb of this period. Whilst there are two niches placed into the eastern side of the tomb, one of which was estimated to have once held a niche stone that was stated by Emery to have been found relatively nearby to the tomb, the inside of the tomb itself is remarkable only due to the nature in which it's contents were found (Emery, 1962, p. 24). As mentioned briefly earlier, within the tomb itself, positioned relatively nearby the body of the deceased were a selection of ceramic pots and bowls that had been used to contain different food



Figure 1: The niche stone from the eastern wall of Saqqara 3477, found nearby: Emery 1962: Pl. 3a

stuffs that had been placed within the tomb (Leonard, Jr, 2000, p. 4). This was unique among all other tombs that had been excavated in the area before, due to the way in which, in other tombs of the same period, disruption to the tombs themselves, presumably due to tomb robbery in antiquity had caused any similar arrays to be destroyed (Emery, 1962, p. 9). This ensured that the funerary banquet as arranged in Saqqara 3477 was the first tomb where such a banquet had been discovered in-situ, allowing for both excavators and other archaeologists and Egyptologists to have a glimpse

into the way in which such funerary offerings were placed into the tomb (Leonard, Jr, 2000, p. 3), how they might have been eaten by those who had placed them (Lucas & Harris, 2012, p. 52), and how they might relate in the greater sphere of ancient Egyptian funerary beliefs.

The funerary feast within Saqqara tomb 3477 was positioned in the main funerary chamber, nearby the coffin of the deceased, it had been placed in front of the coffin, and had been placed on the floor (Emery, 1962, p. 20), a possible reason for the destruction of other similar funerary feasts by tomb robbers as the location would have inhibited access to the coffin itself. However, according to ancient Egyptian funerary beliefs the location of the food would have also provided the deceased person with almost immediate access to the funerary feast within the afterlife (Harrington, 2013, p. 12). Evidence for this is shown in other parts of Saqqara where proximity to the deceased has been implied to have provided access to other people into the deceased persons afterlife (Childe, 1945, p. 17). In the case of smaller nobility being buried in smaller tombs surrounding the larger one of the king. It has been discussed as to the meaning of these burials, and it appears that the proximity to the tomb of the king was in order to allow the nobility into the king's afterlife, as at the time it was considered that only the king was capable of having a true afterlife, due to the close connection that they held with the gods (Budge & Budge, 1993, p. 32). The nobility that were buried near the king presumably held and carried out similar positions as they might have done during their lifetimes (Redford, 2002, p. 41), and it is this that creates the idea that the funerary feast laid out in the tomb of Saqqara 3477 is an example of an offering to the deceased to take into the afterlife with them.

This could have the implications that the food within the tomb would have been something that the deceased person was used to eating, possibly a particularly favoured food that they might have wished to take into the afterlife with them, or possibly as an example of the food that would have been eaten as a day to day meal (Dietler & Hayden, 2001, p. 37). However, it is also possible that the

food within the tomb was chosen by the deceased persons relatives as a show of the wealth of the family, being able to provide a lavish feast for their deceased relative, one that may not be consumed by their living relatives (Harrington, 2013, p. 51). A display of the living family's ability to provide such luxuries only to have them sealed away within a tomb, not to be eaten by the ones who commissioned them (Harrington, 2013, p. 42). The use of a consumable object as an offering for the afterlife is a practice that transcends cultures and time periods. Throughout the different periods of ancient Egypt food was considered to be an important part of the afterlife (Baines & Lacovara, 2002, p. 22). With the opening of the mouth ceremony in later periods being considered to be part of the rebirth of the deceased person into the afterlife (Spencer, 1982, p. 45). During which the different senses were reopened, and the deceased person would be able to feel, see, smell, hear and taste again. Thus as the deceased person within the afterlife was not considered to be in a state of being dead, within the afterlife there must exist all the necessary things for the deceased person to sustain themselves within the afterlife (Budge & Budge, 1993, p. 23). In later periods the offering formula could be used alongside physical offerings and replicas in order to provide such essentials within the afterlife, however in earlier periods before the nature of the ancient Egyptian religion had been formalised the offerings that were given to the deceased appear to have been largely physical, edible objects (Lucas & Harris, 2012, p. 12).

The funerary assemblage that was left within the tomb itself was comprised of numerous different offerings, presumably fitting together into one complete meal that might have been offered to the deceased in order to ensure that they had all the necessary food that they might need for the afterlife (Emery, 1962, p. 22). Amongst the different dishes that were a part of the meal there were several types of food, some of which do not show up in later funerary feasts or depictions of offerings (Leonard, Jr, 2000, p. 2). For example, one of the parts of the meal, were a pair of kidneys, and another was a prepared fish that had its head removed from the body (Leonard, Jr, 2000, p. 4). These particular pieces of the meal are of interest when considering the social nature of feasting in ancient Egypt due to the way in which they do not tend to be included in the funerary assemblages

in ancient Egypt (Ikram, 2011, p. 362). This is due to the time period in which Saqqara 3477 is situated, as these foods do not appear in later periods, but there are depictions, particularly of fishing, it implies that these foods are, in later periods not eaten within the funerary sphere, but that they are in the day to day lives of the people of ancient Egypt (Ikram, 2011, p. 369).

This carries implications for the other parts of the funerary assemblage that was left in tomb 3477. Particularly due to the way that this implies that the food that was left within the tomb, rather than a ritualised offering that has been specifically created for the purpose of the afterlife, instead reflects the foods that the deceased person may have eaten while they were alive. As a result of these implications, it is possible to infer that the way in which the food is served within the tomb also reflects the way in which it might have been served had the deceased person been alive, rather than serving as a representation of the ideal way of eating that may have been expected to be used in the afterlife. Whilst it is certain that the food that was left for the deceased was meant to serve as an offering towards them (Dietler & Hayden, 2001, p. 56), extrapolating insights into the living nature of the food left for the dead proves more problematic. One way of exploring the social lives of the ancient Egyptians through their offerings that they left for their deceased lies in the specific items that they left for them.

The funerary feast in Saqqara 3477 is very lavish, and indicates that the person to whom the feast belonged to was a person of some standing (Leonard, Jr, 2000, p. 5). The feast itself is comprised of several different parts, from meats; comprising of beef legs and ribs, cooked and dressed quail, cooked kidneys, a pigeon stew, and a cooked fish, carbohydrates; a barley porridge, bread, and honey sweetened cakes, fruit; both stewed (possibly figs) and fresh (nabk berries, a fruit similar to the modern day cherry), cheese and a jar of wine (Emery, 1962, p. 32). This holds interesting connotations for the way that society worked during the second dynasty of ancient Egypt due to the



Figure 2: Saqqara 3477 Funerary Feast in-situ numbered by the excavator: Emery 1962: Pl. 6a

way that it implies that the person or the family of the person within the tomb was of some personal standing, and wealthy within their own right, possibly being a member of the nobility worthy of having such an extravagant feast within their tomb (Baines & Lacovara, 2002, p. 33). This is further made more interesting by the way in which the person to whom the tomb belongs is a woman, and one of a fairly advanced age for the time, likely being within her 60s (Leonard, Jr, 2000, p. 5). This could be used to imply that within the society of second dynasty Egypt, the role of women was more influential than might at first be assumed (Wodak, 1997, p. 31). For such a distinguished feast to have

been placed within her tomb, she was either an important member of the community or had a wealthy family that could afford such a lavish display (Wodak, 1997, pp. 32-33).

This implies that the foods that are found within her tomb are not representative of the food that the general population may have eaten at the time, nor are they representative of the food that the general people might have had access to (Buzon & Simonetti, 2013, p. 121). Whilst it is likely that there are similarities between the different ways in which different people may have consumed their foods, it is important to draw attention to such differences. For example, the food that a member of the nobility might have consumed within their day to day life might have been presented in a different manner to that which a poorer person might have access to, similarly the type of food that might have been eat may have been slightly different depending on the class of the person eating it, despite being identical in other ways. An example of this might be seen within the way in which the type of bread in medieval monastic Britain might change depending on the person for whom it was prepared (Flandrin & Montanari, 2013, p. 25). Purer, whiter flour which took longer to make and was therefore more expensive was used to make white bread, something that was only eaten by the nobility and those in high positions within the clergy (Flandrin & Montanari, 2013, p. 31). Brown bread, which might be made from flour that was grinded at the home was reserved purely for those of lower the lower classes (Flandrin & Montanari, 2013, p. 30). Whilst it can be difficult to draw comparison with two such completely different cultures and time spans, it can be presumed that there might be events similar in nature occurring within the funerary sphere of ancient Egypt. Particularly in the way that it might be suggested that even in a situation where two people of different classes might have been eating the same food, prepared in almost exactly the same way, there might be differences regarding the differing quality of ingredients or of the amounts of the ingredients that are used in the differing dishes (Delwen, 1999, p. 82).

Similarly, there may have been differences regarding the different ways in which food was consumed between the different social classes of ancient Egypt. Within Saqqara 3477 there were

differences in the types of dishes that the different foods were presented on (Leonard, Jr, 2000, p. 4). Whilst some dishes were unspecified within the original report, it appears that the dishes on which the food were served were made from either pottery or from alabaster (Emery, 1962, p. 42). As alabaster was considered to be a prestige substance, that in later years was used in the building of royal statues it can be inferred that the lady to whom Saqqara 3477 was in the possession of a luxurious set of eating implements that would not have been as readily available to the general population of second dynasty Egypt (Castro, 2006, p. 75). This makes the suggestions made by Alfred Lucas to be of further interest, as in his *Ancient Egyptian Materials and Industries* he investigates the idea that depending on the type of material that the food was served on, the food was served either hot or cold (Lucas & Harris, 2012, p. 14). He suggests the idea that foods that were served on the finer alabaster dishes were dishes that were served cold, and dishes that were served on the pottery dishes were served hot, owing to their ability to better understand higher temperatures (Lucas & Harris, 2012, pp. 15-16).

In the case of the funerary meal in Saqqara 3477 this ensures that foods such as the barley porridge, cheese and the fresh berries (in this case served in a diorite bowl rather than alabaster) would have been served cold, with the vast majority of other dishes, such as the meats, bread and stewed fruits being served hot (Leonard, Jr, 2000, p. 3). This might have implications for the way in which different social classes within ancient Egypt consumed their food, with the potential for there being a differing set of etiquettes governing the way that they ate and the way that the foods that they ate were presented. Within the modern world there are examples where the service that food is served with differs between the different classes that are using it. One of the best examples for this would be the way in which the up and coming middle classes of the Victorian era and onwards would attempt to mimic the upper classes in order to ensure that they could earn a similar form of prestige (Dahrendorf, 1959, p. 32). One of the ways in which they chose to do this was by mimicking the way that the upper classes ate, and the ways in which they presented and consumed their food (Dahrendorf, 1959, p. 34). It was through this process that the use of a fish knife came to be

popularised as a way of showing that the middle classes were equally as refined as the upper class members of society (Dahrendorf, 1959, p. 31). This serves as an example of the way in which different social groups can develop their own individual ways of enacting even the simplest of day to day tasks, largely due to the way that the fish knife was an entirely middle class invention owing to the mistaken idea that the upper echelons of society could and did have a different form of cutlery for every type of food they ate (Dahrendorf, 1959, p. 36). Whilst it is possible that this phenomenon is a modern occurrence, and does not have a parallel within ancient Egyptian society, it is possible that the different way that the ancient Egyptians may have served their food, as exemplified in Saqqara 3477 had a greater impact on the way in which they lived their lives than at first appeared.

An Analysis of Funerary Feasting within Ancient Egypt

Funerary feasting, as an expression of religious practice is not a unique practice to the ancient Egyptians (Hamilakis & Sherratt, 2012, p. 189). It occurs both throughout the ancient world and throughout many different societies today. Within ancient Egypt the practice of funerary feasting spans the entire length of the ancient Egyptian society, from the remains of funerary feasts being found within second dynasty tombs at Saqqara to depictions and records of funerary feasts dating from the Ptolemaic rule of Egypt (Dietler & Hayden, 2001, p. 31). Where professional associations might ensure that each of their members receive an appropriate funerary feast, ensuring that each other living member contribute towards the funeral of another member in the event of their death (Riggs, 2010, p. 3). The way that Egyptian funerary beliefs experienced very little change throughout the duration of the ancient Egyptian society is expressed in the continuous use of similar practices throughout the extent of ancient Egyptian society (Budge & Budge, 1993, p. 16). A major example of a funerary practice of ancient Egypt that despite minor changes to the way in which it was carried out and the meaning behind why the practice was used is the preservation of the body through

mummification (Budge & Budge, 1993, p. 12). As with funerary feasting this preservation of the body serves as an example of the constancy of ancient Egyptian funerary beliefs. However, there is also another link between funerary feasting and the mummification of the body which lies within the different kinds of acceptable foods that are left as offerings to the deceased person within a funerary feast (Dietler & Hayden, 2001, p. 19).

Within the second dynasty tombs at Saqqara, particularly tomb 3477 one of the offerings that was placed within the tomb was an offering of fish (Emery, 1962, p. 13). This has interesting implications for the types of offerings that are used, and for the place of funerary feasts as offerings, due to the nature of fish as an offering in later periods (Ikram, 2011, p. 369). Within later periods the association of the fish of the Nile and the Osiris myth, led ancient scholars such as Herodotus to write that the practice of eating fish was in fact forbidden within ancient Egypt, and furthermore that fish were considered to be a “dirty” food, one that was not considered to be appropriate for the offering to the deceased (Ikram, 2011, p. 369). This is due to the position that fish hold within the Osiris myth, as when Isis was collecting the pieces of Osiris after they had been torn asunder by Set, she was unable to collect all of the pieces due to the way that the fish had eaten Osiris’ penis where it lay in the Nile (Baines, et al., 1991, p. 41). This indicates that there was a change in the funerary practices of ancient Egypt, as after the appearance of the Osiris myth into the mythos of the ancient Egyptian funerary tradition, the occasions where fish is seen to occur within a funerary setting become few and far between (Ikram, 2011, p. 367). It also implies that there is a level of disconnect between the ideal, perfect world of the afterlife, and that of the world of the living, due to the way in which, as evidenced from depictions of fishing, fish remained a staple part of the ancient Egyptian diet despite their absence from the funerary sphere (Hawkes, 1992, p. 21). It has been suggested that there were specific days whereby the eating of fish was unacceptable to some members of the populace, such as the priestly classes but there is little physiological evidence to suggest that this is indeed the case (Ikram, 2011, p. 370).

The association with food and the afterlife of ancient Egypt is largely due to the ancient Egyptian belief that the food was one of the necessary parts of the funerary equipment that would be needed by the deceased on their entry into the afterlife (Redford, 2002, p. 219). This is due to the way that the ancient Egyptian people didn't so much consider their afterlife to be an afterlife like the Christian Heaven might be considered to be today, rather the ancient Egyptians believed that the afterlife was merely an extension of the life that had already existed prior to becoming deceased (Spencer, 1982, p. 52). As a result of this, the provision of food for the afterlife became less of a method of solely respecting the deceased ancestors, and more associated with the prevention of dying a true, eternal death. As the living person could starve to death when they were alive, so might a deceased person in the afterlife, and as a consequence the provision of food for the afterlife became a necessity (Baines, et al., 1991, p. 32).

As time progressed the provision of food became more heavily ritualised, with symbolic consumption playing a greater part in the funerary rituals of ancient Egypt, owing to the practicality of a situation where it was no longer likely that there would be real food being left to the deceased (Baines & Lacovara, 2002, p. 9). Symbolic consumption in regards to ancient Egypt is where a non-consumable object takes the place of a consumable object and through either ritual or magical means is capable of fulfilling the purpose of a consumable object, thereby providing a deceased person with sustenance within the afterlife (David, 1982, p. 19). An example of this symbolic consumption as a form of funerary feasting would be in the offering formula, wherein the deceased person is given voice offerings of bread, beer, oxen, fowl, alabaster and every other good and pure thing. Another example for symbolic consumption would be in the use of offering tables that had depictions of different foods depicted upon them (David, 1982, p. 20). By the pouring of libations, it would have been considered to be possible to have been providing for the deceased within the afterlife (Childe, 1945, p. 13). The similarities between the voice offerings of these later periods and the physical offerings within the second dynasty tombs at Saqqara of interest, as it implies that whilst there has been a change in the way that the funerary rites are being enacted and perceived by

the people of ancient Egypt, the general ideas behind the religion are still the same. This connection between the physical act of eating food, and the ritual idea of consuming food for sustenance within the afterlife is shown with the transition between the two ways of thinking from the second dynasty to the late Ptolemaic era of Egypt. Whilst these changes to the belief system of the ancient Egyptians are also undoubtedly due to changes in the availability of food stuffs to be deposited in tombs and as a matter of practicality (Buzon & Simonetti, 2013, p. 13), it also marks a change within the belief systems of the ancient Egyptians. One that, whilst evident within the religious beliefs of the time, is difficult to investigate fully if only the archaeology of the time is consulted. As a consequence of the combination of the funerary beliefs of the ancient Egyptians and the physical remains of funerary feasting, alongside the eventual merging of the two, it could be argued that the symbolic consumption that developed from the earlier belief systems, could be considered to be a form of funerary feasting of its own. One where, rather than an equal exchange between the physical and spiritual forms of consumption are taking place, the physical extension of the funerary feasting is taken over by the symbol of the feast occurring. Allowing there to be a continuous supply of the goods that might be offered within a funerary feast in the afterlife.

The offering formula is not the only example of food in ancient Egypt being linked to traditional ways of enacting the day to day lives of the ancient Egyptians. In his *Logic of Practice*, Bourdieu states that through the embodiment of habitus, practice becomes the way in which different people of different societies understand and interact with the world around them (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 31). Due to the way in which habitus is described as the habits that are learned at the hearth that allow a person to subconsciously fit into the society in which they live (Bourdieu, 1987, p. 101). The unspoken rules of society that are taught to a child, typically by their parents or guardians (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 42). The way in which the ancient Egyptian funerary beliefs ensured that there was a close connection between the lives of the ancient Egyptians and the afterlives of the ancient Egyptians, in that the afterlife was considered to be a perfect continuation of the life that had come before, ensures that the necessity that the ancient Egyptians placed upon the food that they wanted to take with them

into the afterlife would have held a similar appeal to those of the ancient Egyptians that were still amongst the living (Baines & Lacovara, 2002, p. 16). Whilst it is possible that in some tombs the consumable offerings that might be left there would be of personal interest to the deceased, at the time of the deceased person's death, no matter how much work that person may have personally put into their tomb and their afterlife, it would have been the family of that person that would have ensured that the final wishes of that person would be carried out (Hayden, 2013, p. 92). This has an impact on the actual offerings that might be placed within the tomb itself. As the family of the deceased person may decide to prioritise the more ritual ideals over the personal preferences of the deceased person (Hayden, 2013, p. 93). For a society such as that of ancient Egypt for which the binary opposites of life and death (Hawkes, 1992, p. 14) were such a major part of the lives of the people, the way in which the people interacted together within those spheres aids in further understanding the link between funerary feasting and the social lives of those who lived in ancient Egypt.

This carries implications for the way in which the concept of consumption in ancient Egypt might be viewed. For example, the way in which the ancient Egyptians would refer back to their past, and keep traditions within the living memory, despite or even because of those traditions being centuries old. One of the depictions of a bakery scene within KV11 a tomb belonging to Ramses III within the valley of the kings includes triangular pieces of bread, remarkably similar to those that were found as part of the funerary banquet in Saqqara 3477 (Kitchen, 2001, p. 19), this implies that there are still traditional methods of cooking being used by the ancient Egyptians, at least two thousand years after their original conception (Kitchen, 2001, p. 23). Despite changes within the sphere of funerary beliefs, it is apparent that the day to day lives of the ancient Egyptians of the New Kingdom, despite changes in the governance of ancient Egypt, might appear recognisable to those who had lived within the Old Kingdom, during the second dynasty of ancient Egypt. This is in stark contrast to the way in which food is consumed within modern day western society, where invention and change are seen to be some of the driving forces behind some of the most famous modern day

chefs (Flandrin & Montanari, 2013, p. 45). With new methods of cooking old dishes and new ways of experimenting with old flavours are the norm in many high-end modern day restaurants (Flandrin & Montanari, 2013, p. 53). This could be said to reflect changes that occurred during the western industrial revolution, where new foods and spices and flavours were being experimented with, and could possibly be said to reflect the state of modern day western society as a whole (Dahrendorf, 1959, p. 20). The drive to progress and to change, and socially, to improve both upon a person's social status in life but also their economic wealth in a fast moving and fast paced society. In contrast to this perspective, it is possible that the way in which the ancient Egyptians could hold to older traditions and ways of doing cooking, and interacting with the foods that they ate, implies that the

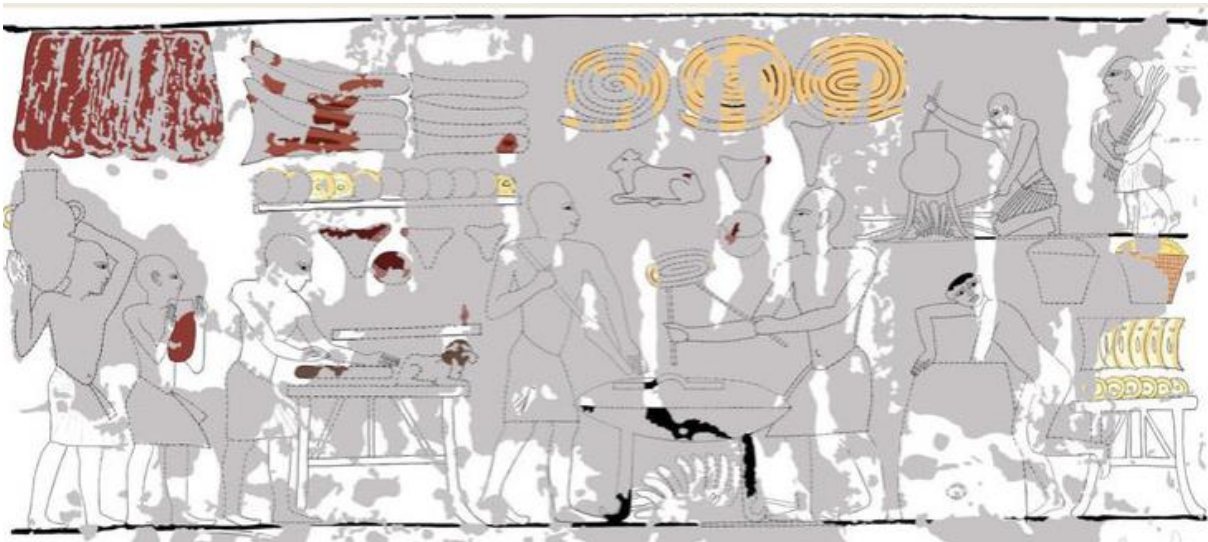


Figure 3: Ba Chamber, Reconstruction of a Bakery Scene: A. Weber: [Sourced from: The Ramses iii Project: 10/04/2018] [<https://www.rameses-iii-project.com/english/the-project/>]

pace of life during the Old Kingdom of ancient Egypt, and of ancient Egypt in later periods was slower than pace of society in the modern day west (McWilliams, 2012, p. 17). That as a consequence the more traditional values were the formative foundation upon which the rest of ancient Egyptian society rested. That similarly to the way in which western society today could be considered to be an individualist society, and many places within the East a collectivist society (Giddens, 1975, p. 214), perhaps the ancient Egyptian society, based upon the foundations and lessons of the previous generations could be considered a traditionalist society.

A Comparison of the Archaeology of Saqqara 3477 and of Funerary Feasting within Ancient Egypt

The second dynasty tombs of the old kingdom fit well into the over-arching narrative of the funerary beliefs of ancient Egypt. This is due to the way that, particularly in the case of Saqqara 3477, they fit neatly into the gap in understanding about how the funerary beliefs and the society of ancient Egypt created by the pre-dynastic kings and that which came afterwards (Childe, 1945, p. 20). Creating a link between two key parts of the ancient Egyptian story of their society that might not otherwise be as possible to research. (Spencer, 1982, p. 34)

The tomb at Saqqara, provides a way of directly investigating the position of funerary feasts within ancient Egyptian society. The first of these ways is due to the way that the owner of the tomb is an elderly woman, one who, at some point during her lifetime sustained some form of long term damage that would have made eating very difficult (Emery, 1962, p. 22). The concept of gender within early dynastic Egyptian society is one which is an interesting topic to handle (Wilk & Rathje, 1982, p. 21). Primarily, this is due to the way that due to the scarcity of any full text records the large majority of any evidence comes from archaeological sources, and, due to the way that much of the archaeological evidence is associated with male burials, the topic can prove to have little in the ways of unbiased data, for which the addition of Saqqara 3477 is a useful and interesting addition (Wodak, 1997). This addition allows for a deeper comparison into the differences between how the early dynastic peoples viewed the different genders, and allows for a comparison between not only the tombs of male and female rulers, but it can also be used as a comparison with both male, and female early dynastic rulers (Budge & Budge, 1993, p. 16).

Furthermore, Saqqara 3477 is also useful purely as part of a study into the nature of food in ancient Egypt. What people were eating, how people were cooking, how the different dishes were served. Similarly, due to the nature of the location in which the food is laid out, it is possible to apply the different theories that apply to funerary beliefs in order to investigate the nature of funerary feasting in the second dynasty of ancient Egypt. Within this, the position of Saqqara 3477 within the

sphere of ancient Egyptian funerary beliefs is fairly understandable, due to the nature of where the funerary assemblage was found, it can be assumed that the funerary feast was laid out as a form of offering towards the lady who owned the tomb, presumably in order to allow the deceased person access to the food in the afterlife (Leonard, Jr, 2000, p. 14). Due to the way that according to ancient Egyptian funerary beliefs the body, so long as it looks good on the outside, shall be perfect once again when the deceased person is reborn within the afterlife (Ikram, 2011, p. 19). It also allows the tomb to be fit into the wider setting of ancient Egyptian funerary beliefs due to the way that it would allow the lady within the tomb to eat foods that she must not have been able to do for quite some time during her life time (Spencer, 1982, p. 13). Providing a link to the greater set of ancient Egyptian funerary beliefs as a whole.

Finally, there is the major connection between the funerary feast in Saqqara 3477 and the different forms of completing similar styles of offerings in later periods. This is due to the way in which the funerary meal within Saqqara 3477 could be seen as an early prototype of the more robust set of strict funerary beliefs that emerge later of, and that have so much of an impact on the later strict formula that, at least partially, take the place of the larger funerary meal that is sealed within the tomb with the deceased (Ikram, 2011, p. 20). Equally speaking the way in which the funerary feast within Saqqara 3477 is in fact a funerary feast provides further links to the way in which the modern day might be able to shed some light onto the less understood parts of the history of ancient Egyptian society. This is due to the way that, even in modern times, within the west, the idea of eating and drinking to commemorate people who have past is not an entirely unusual principle (Hayden, 2013, p. 64). For example, in a situation such as at a funeral or a wake, where after the ceremony is completed it is fairly common to have all those that attended the ceremony to eat a meal together (Hayden, 2013, p. 62). Often something that might have been a favourite of the deceased. In this manner, the funerary feast within Saqqara 3477 also serves to work as a reminder that the person within the tomb was once, a living person, with people that mourned their passing enough that they wanted this person to have enough food to be able to make it in the afterlife.

Which is perhaps the largest connection to the social side of ancient Egypt that it might be possible to get.

Conclusion

Saqqara 3477 is an exceptional example of a funerary feast within a second dynasty tomb, largely due to the way in which almost the entirety of the funerary assemblage was discovered in-situ, and most parts of the funerary assemblage are very easily identifiable (Emery, 1962, p. 15). It can serve to help explore several different social concepts. For example, the concept of gender within ancient Egyptian early dynastic society, and can also be used to explore other factors of ancient Egyptian society. These factors might include both habitus, and practice though the tomb is also useful in helping to gain further insight into the position of funerary feasts within the sphere of ancient Egyptian funerary beliefs as a whole.

Using structuralism as the key part of analysing any case study has its drawbacks, primarily amongst these is the fact that a large amount of Structuralist theory is based around supposition (Harland, 1988, p. 12). Creating hypothesis about incomplete data sets and then using those hypotheses to create further conclusions. Whilst Structuralism is a very good method for helping to explore a concept and for allowing a person to compare and contrast a topic in ways that might not otherwise be possible, the fact that conclusions that draw strongly from this theory have such a weakness to them can cause conclusions that are completely irrelevant to the topic or that have gone too far from the original idea of the paper. However, providing that the person using structuralism is aware of this key fault in the way that structuralism works, it becomes possible to explore a single topic from angles that might not otherwise be possible.

As a consequence of this, it does make it possible to use the second dynasty tombs as a way of exploring the social nature of feasting in ancient Egypt. However, the very nature of structuralism

ensures that whilst it might be possible to explore the social nature of feasting in ancient Egypt, it might not always give the most valid of responses to the question that you are seeking to answer. In short, it is possible to use Saqqara 3477 as a way of exploring the social nature of feasting in ancient Egypt but it is likely that the final conclusion would need to be further explored using other theories and archaeological techniques before it could be verified to a high enough standard.

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