

“Interconnecting circles of power”

An approach to a study of the regional administration in Egypt during the reign of Thutmose III

Daniela Martins

Abstract: During the reign of Thutmose III, as a result of the military campaigns and of the increased importance of the army as a branch of the royal government in ancient Egypt, there was a growing tendency to favour some military officials with political and administrative positions. In this context, the aim of this paper is to analyse the Egyptian officials bearing the title of ‘governor’ or ‘mayor’ during this reign and the articulation of local powers with the king and his retinue. I discuss briefly some of the questions related to the study of regional administration and I intend to determine to what extent it is possible to identify this pattern of favour in administrative positions related to the provinces, also considering how these officials were connected with the king and his entourage.

1. Introduction

Even if some attempts to systematize and categorize functions in its hierarchal dependency for the New Kingdom have been made (O’Connor 1983, 208), the complexity of the administrative reality of ancient Egypt seems to be better synthesized in Betsy Bryan’s words when she mentions that the “Egyptian bureaucracy was labyrinthine, and the centre of the maze was the institution of kingship” (Bryan 2006, 69). In this sense, any analysis of regional administration must reflect the complexity of the system not based on its static organization as we may understand it today but, instead, on its own natural fluid relationships (Shirley 2013, 572) between what we presently may define as secular and non-secular powers.

The administrative division of ancient Egyptian territory is indicative, first of all, of the dimension of the country and the time that was necessary to travel from one end to the other (Cruz-Uribe 1994, 52–53). If one assumes an idea of an absolute power centred on kingship,

it must reflect, at least, two fundamental premises: territory and time. The control of a vast territory undoubtedly needed the collaboration and coalition of other main powers – religious and administrative – that, connected with kingship, allowed the control of the different regions of the country (Moreno García, 2019, 76–77; O’Connor 1983, 205). The temples, as a nuclear unit for the creation of the settlements, were also fundamental for the maintenance of royal power and royal discourse (Moreno García 2019, 171–173). The mayors, as part of the regional administration had, as their principal tasks, the control of the regional resources, the collection of taxes (Haring 2010, 225/229) and provisioning the royal mooring places along the Nile, a practice instituted by Thutmose III (Haring 2010, 229 citing Kruchten 1981, 98–99). The tomb of Thutmose III’s vizier Rekhmire (TT 100) is particularly illustrative of these functions since he was responsible for the collections of revenues from the provinces (Haring 2010, 229).

It is perhaps illusory to assume that the Egyptian bureaucracy controlled the entire society (Manning 2016, 112). More than controlling society as a whole, it is probably more accurate to say that the Egyptian government was keen on controlling production, revenues and the movement of people.¹ The role of the economy in the composition of the settlements might also explain the tendency for the concentration of people in certain areas and, consequently, the establishment of political power (Moeller 2016, 17).

The ancient Egyptian administration was also profoundly connected with a sense of mobility. The clearest example of this is perhaps the monarch since the government of the country was based, from the Second Dynasty onwards, on the movement of the king throughout the country. This event, known as *shemsu Hor* “Following Horus”, is already attested in the Palermo Stone (Haring 2010, 229).² In the same way, the mobility of the officials is also attested (Grajetzki 2009, 190–191). These movements can be particularly identified by cultic practices and monumental or non-monumental inscriptions. The former, for instance, can possibly explain the cult of Meretseger at Elephantine (Budka 2015, 13–14; Bommas 2018, 131–143) and also other Theban deities in the same region (Budka 2015, 20–21). The latter, on the other hand, is possible to be identified in the large corpus of names and titles of Theban and Memphite officials around the First Cataract (Budka 2015, 14). The same conclusion can be inferred by the fact that officials had temporary living quarters

in different parts of the country during the New Kingdom (Budka 2015, 14). Also, statues, stelae, rock shrines and graffiti can attest the same practice (Budka 2015, 14–15).

It is important to consider the nature of the bureaucracy in ancient Egypt, particularly concerning the titles. Although officials often held a significant number of titles that does not reflect ancient Egypt as a profound bureaucratic system because some of those titles are purely honorific.³ Rather, these honorific titles can reveal their spheres of influence in different circuits or circles of interaction. On the other hand, it is important to consider that some titles are not exactly correspondent with their very nature. The most evident example of this is perhaps, during the mid-18th Dynasty, the case of ‘civil’ officials bearing military titles, without their function being really military in nature (Shirley 2011, 291–319; Gnirs 2013, 639–717). The complexity of those titles and the way they worked on position individuals and their families recall the fundamental principle of fluidity and interconnection. Even at a regional level, it does not reflect a simplified and rigid administrative structure, as diagrams as such of David O’Connor might suggest (O’Connor 1983, 208).

As a result of the reunification of the country following the Second Intermediate Period, Thebes became the major centre for political power (Shirley 2013, 576–577; Polz 2018, 217–233). The military nature of the late 17th Dynasty and early 18th Dynasty clearly favoured individuals connected with the army and with the royal entourage (Shirley 2013,

¹ Note that power, authority and influence also circulated on the margins of institutions and central authority. See Moreno García (2013, 1029–1065).

² The annals of the Palermo Stone record royal roles and activities such as the biennial *šms-hr*, a royal tour through the country, to exercise political control and to perform rituals. For an in-depth analysis on the Palermo Stone see Hsu (2010, 68–89).

³ Christopher Eyre recently addressed this problematic on his lecture on “Peopling Ancient Egypt”, 5 of

February 2019 at Museo Egizio: “We have the assumption that runs through much of the Egyptological literature that strings of titles represent departmentalized management structures and imply forms of efficiency. It is simply not justified by any form of evidence other than the fact people had long strings of titles”. Museo Egizio Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/museoegizio/videos/356746981832689/>, 31.10.19).

580–582). It is thus interesting to see that the court and the local temple were highly interconnected and that the advancement of military individuals created the first momentum of promotion (early-18th Dynasty) and association of the military with administrative offices.⁴ Those families continued to be influential, at least, until the second momentum of promotion (mid-18th Dynasty) and reorganization of the administration. What is being purposed here is precisely to analyse this dynamic at a regional level for the reign of Thutmose III, and to determine not only their interconnections with the central government but also to question their position within the court. For the specific purpose of this case study, Thebes and their known mayors will not be considered as they are profoundly connected with what is regarded as central administration, specifically the vizierate.

2. Circles of power: The regional officials

Nekhheh and Iunyt (3rd and 6th provinces of Upper Egypt)

Pahery, owner of a tomb in Elkab⁵, is known to have been the mayor of the 3rd and 6th provinces of Upper Egypt during the reign of Thutmose III. He was the grandson of Ahmose son of Ibana from his maternal side and his mother, Kem, married the scribe Atefrura, a high Theban dignitary who was the tutor of the prince Wadjmes, son of Thutmose I (Roehrig 1900, 26–27). As governor and scribe, Pahery was responsible for the grain production of the region under his control (Bryan 2006, 100) and he was the uppermost of the priests of Nekhbet. Some of his functions as an official are mentioned and depicted in his tomb (Griffith and Tylor 1894; Devillers 2018). On the south end of the west wall, it is possible to identify

the inspection of the grain and the agricultural domains. In this task, three assistants accompany Pahery carrying bags, napkins and a stool. An interesting scene is depicted on the 3rd register of this wall, where a chariot harnessed to two horses appear. Trying to calm the animals, Pahery says: “Remain calm, do not be disobedient, excellent horse, beloved of his master, with whom the prince can rely on no matter what” (Griffith and Tylor 1894, 13). This scene can perhaps be linked with other notable functions of Pahery. Like his father, he also became a royal tutor to a son of Thutmose I also named Wadjmes (Roehrig 1990, 81; Bryan 2006, 100). The difference of time probably suggests that this was a different person since the depictions of the princes are usually associated with childhood.⁶ In fact, Pahery’s tomb also has a scene of the mayor with the prince on his lap, complemented by adults and other children bringing offerings. The text, partially legible, says: “bringing some offerings by his children and grandchildren, adoringly[...]”.

Roehrig (1990, 81) suggests that his role as a royal tutor to prince Wadjmes might have been the result of his valuable service in his functions for the central administration as “overseer of fields in the southern district” and the “one who was trusted by the treasurer in the southern voyage, the excellent scribe of accounts”.

Other tasks represented in his tomb are the counting of livestock, the receipt of gold, the supervision of fishing activities and the hunting of birds with a net, and also the wine-harvests. The gold scene is possibly associated with the existent gold mines in the Eastern desert of Elkab, therefore being under his jurisdiction. The fishing activities, hunting of birds and

⁴ For a specific analysis on the early-18th Dynasty powerbase see Shirley (2010, 73–113).

⁵ Description of Pahery’s titles and tomb follow Griffith and Tylor (1894), Devillers (2018, 31–48) and T. Benderitter, Paheiri:

(https://osirisnet.net/tombes/el_kab/pahery/e_pahery_01.html, 31.10.19). Official with titles n° 1077 and 1090 in Al-Ayedi (2006, 319, 323).

⁶ For a more in depth discussion see Roehrig (1990, 81–85).

wine-harvests seem to suggest a connection with the marshlands, and one may ask if there was any involvement of Pahery on a seasonal scale with other regions. Concerning the wine, while it is known that the majority of the production was in the Delta, Elkab seems to have been a centre of production as well.⁷

Thinis (8th province of Upper Egypt)

During the reign of Hatsheput and Thutmose III, Satepihu was the mayor of Thinis, and his wife was a royal nurse (Bryan 2006, 100). During the solo reign of Thutmose III, however, two more officials are known for this province: Intef and Min (Bryan 2006, 100).

Intef is the owner of TT 155, the autobiographical Louvre stela (C26) and a funerary cone (MET 14.1.428; Macadam 1957 n° 139).⁸ He started his career during the co-regency period (Hatshepsut–Thutmose III) (Bryan 2006, 90), and his titles reveal that his occupation was associated with the palace: “My office (*iꜣt*) was in the per nesu, (l.p.h.), my duty (*wnwt*) was in the palace (*stp-sꜣ*), my completion (*km*) was in the ruyt.” (Bryan 2006, 90; Redford 2003, 180). From his monuments we learn that Intef was also a “royal herald”, “overseer of the granaries”, “first reporter of the king”, “controller of all works of the royal house”, and “mayor of Thinis and chief of all oases” (cf. Redford 2003, 174–181 and Säve-Söderbergh 1957, 11–21). With regard to the last title, in his tomb one finds depictions of scenes in the marshlands, and some fragments showing transport ships as well. It is possible that these ships are associated with a scene of taxation, since grain is also depicted, and the text mentions that they are headed for the city of Amun. It is interesting to note, though, that other specific objects like weapons seem to be

part of the taxes received and inspected by Intef (Säve-Söderbergh 1957, 14–15).

The autobiography mentions Intef’s involvement with the military campaigns of Thutmose III – “Now I followed the king of the Two Lands and stuck close to his footsteps in [the northern and southern lands]” (Redford 2003, 180) – but his role abroad was similar to his duties at home (Bryan 2006, 91). In other words, Intef was responsible for the king’s rest-houses while on campaign, travelled ahead of the army for its arrangements and provisioned it with supplies:

Every palace situated (*ḥr-sꜣ*) in a foreign land was assessed for [supplies] and I travelled before the elite troops at the head of the army; and (by the time) my lord came safely to me I had provisioned it. I supplied it with all good and desirable things (available) abroad (*ḥr ḥꜣst*), better than an Egyptian palace, purified, cleansed, with privacy and security for their apartments, and the pantry staffed by its attendants. (Redford 2003, 180–181).

This also seems to imply that Intef had the capacity for gathering products in the foreign lands, which fits his position of a royal herald. Intef’s assessment of products from foreign lands was, however, likely related to his reporting role (Bryan 2006, 91; Redford 2003, 181; Säve-Söderbergh 1957, pls. 11–13). Despite the fact that his autobiography briefly refers military functions – “I was as much a soldier as the master swordsman, and deported myself like his braves”⁹ (Redford 2003, 180) – Intef was a ‘civil’ official who seems to have had the need to compare himself with the soldiers (Shirley 2011, 301). The incorporation of Intef in the logistics of the army does not seem to be associated with a further gain of political positions. The autobiography, where no

⁷ For the production of wine in Ancient Egypt, see the online project Irep en Kemet (<http://www.wineofancientegypt.com/home-map>, 31.10.2019) and also Raedler (2016, 245–253).

⁸ Official with title n° 1098 in Al-Ayedi (2006, 325–326).

⁹ Alternatively translated by Galán *IEI* (140) as: “[...] I was brave like the one who had weapons, I conquered as his brave ones”.

mention for progress is made, and the depiction of deliveries on the back wall of his tomb seem to suggest that he acted as a herald of the king at the same time that he was mayor of Thinis (Säve-Söderbergh 1957, 14). Nevertheless, this certainly favoured his influence and trust at court.

Min¹⁰, on the other hand, is the owner of Theban tomb 109. Little is known about his family, except for the mother's name that was Say and his sons who were called Senty (Iuty) and Sobekmose. He held the title of seal-bearer of the king of Lower Egypt, overseer of the army in the western river, chief administrator of the lord of the Two Lands, overseer of the south, scribe, overseer of priests of Osiris and Onuris, overseer of the singers, steward and festival leader of Osiris, and also mayor of the Oasis.¹¹ Although his tomb is not properly published, two famous depictions from his tomb are known, especially because of the prince Amenhotep, son of Thutmose III, later Amenhotep II. In fact, Min also was a royal tutor, which explains the relief where he appears with the prince on his lap, and also a scene of him teaching the prince how to shoot a bow and arrow. The prince is labelled as *sꜥ nswt*, king's son, and is depicted as a very young man. These archery lessons seem to have occurred in the palace of Min at Thinis, which means that the prince spent some time in the household of this official (Roehrig 1990, 197–198).

¹⁰ Description of Min's titles and tomb follows Bryan (2006, 100), Chevereau (1994, 32), Taylor (2001, 29), Roehrig (1990, 194–195) and the archaeological project of his tomb available at M. Garbagnati, Min Project

(<http://www.min-project.com/en-gb/home.aspx>, 31.10.2019). Official with titles n° 1070 in Al-Ayedi (2006, 317).

¹¹ One must consider that most of *sepat* / provinces had very important access to desert trade routes and quarries in both Eastern and Western Desert which

Qus (10th province of Upper Egypt)

Montuherkhepeshef¹², the owner of the Theban tomb 20, is known to have been mayor of the 10th upper Egyptian province during the reign of Thutmose III. His origins are probably linked with a high-ranking family, but there is no specific information. He was a fan-bearer for the king, and carries other titles such as the sole companion of the king, superintendent of the priests, king's messenger in all countries, king's son, great one of the king of South. This last title was used by Montuherkhepeshef and Iamnefer from Nefrusy, officials that were active members of the royal households of Hatshepsut and Thutmose III (Moreno García 2019, 174). Although without references to his family, the finds inside the tomb led de Garis Davies to suggest the possibility of Montuherkhepeshef to have been married to a daughter of Nebamun (TT 24), steward of the royal wife of Thutmosis III called Nebtu.

Nefrusy (16th province of Upper Egypt)

The governor of Nefrusy was Iamnefer¹³ at the time of Thutmose III. He was a son of Paahawty who was also mayor on this province. His wife was Meryt, a chantress of Thoth, known from a variety of monuments, including the tomb of their son Suemniwet. His career appears to have started as a wab-priest, scribe of divine offerings of Thot, and a High Priest of Thot. He was the overseer of the priests and inherited his father's position as mayor of Nefrusy sometime after the reign of Thutmose II. Iamnefer was also connected with the royal family. The title of *hrp nsty*

means that their economic and movement control was also beyond the Nile Valley (Moeller 2016, 17). See also Long (2012, 105–113), Darnell (2013, 785–830) and Esposito (2014).

¹² Description of Montuherkhepeshef's titles and tomb follows Bryan (2006, 100) and the de Garis Davies (1913, 1–19).

¹³ Description of Iamnefer's titles and tomb follows Bryan (2006, 101) and Manuelian (1987, 110). Official with title n° 1089 in Al-Ayedi (2006, 323).

“controller of the two thrones”, seems to imply involvement on the sed-festivals of Thutmose III, and appears in his statues at the British Museum (BM1728) and IFAO (IFAO 110). He was also a royal tutor, and that is represented in a statue apparently dedicated at the temple of Karnak with the prince Aakheperenreseneb on his lap (Bryan 2006, 101). Iamnefer’s son, Suemniwet, owner of TT 92¹⁴, is one of the 14 children known for this official. It is not certain if any succeeded Iamnefer as mayor of Nefrusy, but Suemniwet became possibly active during this reign in the military campaigns. Despite his high-status familial background, from his tomb one learns that Suemniwet was involved with the military campaigns of Thutmose III and gained prominence during the reign of Amenhotep II (Bryan 2006, 101). This is possible to infer not only by his titles and epithets such as “king’s escort on all his expeditions in the southern and northern foreign lands”, “the escort of the king on water and land” (*URK* IV 144950), but also from his depiction wearing the ‘gold of honour’ (Bryan 2001, pl. 21). Although without an autobiography to further understand his career, Shirley (2005, 215) notes that coming from an elite family may explain why Suemniwet’s career seems to have started from a high-ranking position within the military as a “standard-bearer” (*tꜣy sꜣꜣt*). Suemniwet’s involvement in the Levant might have indirectly reinforced his familial local power and court influence, but it also meant for Suemniwet obtaining high-ranking positions which made him even closer to the palace. Suemniwet’s representations as an official who gained favour from the king are interpreted by Shirley (2005; 2016) as a demonstration that his service to the king was more important to him than his familial connections.¹⁵

Shedet /Fayum (21st province of Upper Egypt)

The mayor of the Fayum during the reign of Thutmose III and also during the reign of his successor, Amenhotep II, was Kapu.¹⁶ Little is known about this official, but he marries his daughter, Shedyt Meryt, with Sobekhotep, son of Min. Min, overseer of the treasury, is a well-known official during the reign of Thutmose III. Although uncertainty remains about his tomb (proposed by Shirley as TT 143?), he is identified as the owner of shrine n° 5 at Gebel es-Silsilah. It is likely that Min was originally from the Delta and that his role was more connected with the North (Shirley 2005, 156 following Bryan 1991, 81). Despite being the son of a high official, Bryan (1991, 8185) accessed that Sobekhotep, the owner of TT 63¹⁷, seems to have inherited his father’s position only later on in his career, during the reign of Thutmose IV. Nevertheless, he became mayor of the Fayum before that, under Amenhotep II (Shirley 2005, 154 following Bryan 1991, 81-85), and this position seems to have reinforced his capacity for inheriting his father’s position in the ‘central’ administration. As a regional official, one must also consider the close distance of the Fayum with one of the most important palaces at the time, Gurob, and, consequently, Fayum’s role in provisioning the royal palace and the proximity of the mayor’s family to the royal residence. The office of mayor seems to have been passed on Sobekhotep’s family, since his son, Paser, is also identified as mayor of the Fayum, apparently receiving this title while his father was uniquely acting as overseer of the treasury (Bryan 1991, 246). The strategy of linking regional with central administrative positions seems to have worked, at least in this particular case, on maintaining important offices under the control of individual families. Moreover, Sobekhotep is also known to have been a royal

¹⁴ Official with title n° 1089 in Al-Ayedi (2006, 323).

¹⁵ See also Guksch (1994).

¹⁶ Description on Kapu, Min and Sobekhotep’s titles

follows Bryan (2006, 101) and Shirley (2008, 152–157).

¹⁷ Official with title n° 1096 in Al-Ayedi (2006, 325).

tutor to the future Amenhotep III under his father Thutmose IV (Roehrig 1990, 216217).

Mennefer (1st province of Lower Egypt)

Two individuals appear as mayors of Memphis during this period. One is Hemy, who is known from a statue at the Louvre Museum (Bryan 2006, 101) and the other - already transitioning into the reign of Thutmose III's successor - is Kenamun, a famous official from the reign of Amenhotep II. Analysing this specific case here will allow us to further understand these interconnecting dynamics. His privileged position resulted from his mother's influence at court since she was a royal nurse. Amenemipet is shown in his son's tomb holding Amenhotep II as a child in her lap, referred to "chief royal nurse, who nurtured the god [...]" (Shirley 2005, 267; Davies and Davies 1930, 19 and pl, IX; *URK IV* 1395). His father was a "steward of Amun" and he inherits his father's position in the priesthood (Shirley 2011, 267). Kenamun grew up at court, being a child of the *kap* (*hrd n k3p*), as did his probable brother Khaemheribsen, 3rd priest of Amun (TT 98; *URK IV* 1500). Khaemheribsen appears in Kenamun's tomb as well as a certain individual called Amenhotep (Shirley 2005, 268–270). Concerning the latter, Shirley (2005, 271) notes that he probably was the mayor of Thisis. Amenhotep was the son of Nebiry, who served Min (TT 109), mayor of Thisis during the reign of Thutmose III. It is thus possible that this Amenhotep had contact with the young prince, who is known to have stayed in Min's household since Min was his royal tutor as attested in his tomb. Pehsukher (TT 88) is also depicted and despite the discrepancy of their ages, it has been suggested that he could also have been a brother of Kenamun and son to the royal nurse Amenemipet (see Shirley 2005, 273–276). Although Kenamun does not seem to inherit his father position, some of his titles link him with the priesthood administration,

such as "overseer of the cattle of Amun", "overseer of door-keepers of the double granary of Amun" (*URK IV* 1390; Davies and Davies 1930, 10–16). The involvement in the military campaigns is recorded in his tomb as – "one who follows the king on his marches upon the foreign land of vile Retenu", "one relating to the two legs upon water, upon land, and upon all foreign countries", "attendant of his lord on his expeditions in the foreign lands of the south and north" (*URK IV* 1400, 1401, 1405, 1406) – but his functions abroad seem to have been non-combative in nature (Shirley 2005, 277). His most common military title is fan-bearer, but he is also called *hry pdt* (commander of a host). Other epithets such as "follower of the king" (*šms nsw*) also seem to indicate his participation abroad (Shirley 2011, 277–278). Interestingly, Kenamun is appointed steward of Peru-nefer (*URK* 1386–1387), responsible for the administration of this naval base and the royal residence near Memphis (Der Manuelian 1987, 159)¹⁸. Shirley (2005, 278–281) considers this moment important for Kenamun moving beyond his mother's influence and establishing a more direct relationship with the king. In this office, he must have had contact with the deliveries of foreign products, which are depicted in his tomb (Davies and Davies 1930, 22–33). Kenamun's participation in the military campaigns was likely to have been a strategy of reinforcing influence, from where a new position derived and this also may explain why he was a recipient of gold of honour (Binder 2008, 240).

The regional administration in context

The military nature of a very significant part of the reign of Thutmose III implied, in principle, the absence of the king during long periods of time. On one hand, the favour of some individuals who participated in the campaigns abroad seems to be progressively visible in

¹⁸ For in depth discussion on Peru-nefer's location see Bietak (2018, 223–250).

general (cf. Martins 2019, 50–52). On the other, the regional officials’ background for this reign does not support a significant change in the administration. In fact, Shirley (2013, 583–584) noted that a smooth transition between the reign of Hatshepsut and his sole reign seems to have been preferable in order to ensure loyalty and stability. Also interesting is the fact that Thutmose III was keen on bringing the Amun domain under royal control. He does not install members of the royal family into the Amun priesthood and he does not associate or connect his top administration with the Amun precinct (Shirley 2013, 584), even though the continuative nature of the regional officials on being overseers of the priesthood is clear.

The very mobile nature of this reign also seems to reinforce the necessity of relying on the mayors’ function as reporters to the vizier and king, as a way to ensure the administration of the country. It is possible that, when in Egypt, the king could either travel around the country and/or also take a more ‘permanent’ residence at one of his palaces. For this time period, the well-known palace precincts at Gurob and Tell el-Dab’a could have been good options. The latter is particularly relevant in this discussion for its distinctive features: several palaces with baths, private apartments including probably one for the superintendent of the harbour stronghold, spacious public building, several large multifunctional workshops, and a temple (Bietak 2018a, 28; Bietak 2018b, 223–250). His mobility may have favoured the existence of nuclear groups of individuals that may have constituted the court in those places and, therefore, were part of the large entourage of the king. This implies that the mobility of the regional officials for a palace where the king has stayed is quite limited to the king’s own mobility. It thus seems not particularly correct to assume that the orbit of those officials was in one place with the king at its centre, but rather, several entourages at different locations. The mobility of these officials could have been associated, instead, with accompanying the

king in certain duties or missions and travels to accomplish instructed tasks or duties associated with their positions.

The analysis of the provincial officials for this reign indicates that: a) two mayors – Pahery and Iamnefer – obtained their positions by inheritance, since their families were known to be in this office before them; b) two mayors – Pahery and Min – had a role as royal tutors; c) one mayor – Intef – is known to be a palatial official; d) two mayors – Intef and Kenamun – are directly associated with the military campaigns, while one – Iamnefer – is indirectly associated with it by the participation of his son called Suemniwet; e) one mayor’s family – Kenamun’s – has a privileged connection at court, especially due to his mother’s role as royal nurse. He also reinforced his position by participating in the military campaigns. Although not included in this study, one must mention that the mayors of Thebes during this period are profoundly connected with high-ranking offices like the vizierate, which means that they were both holding the title of governor of Thebes and vizier. The known mayors for this reign are from the same family, Aametju (TT 83) during the first years, User (TT 61 and TT 131) and finally Rekhmire (TT 100) at the end of the reign. Their functions as viziers are the main theme in their tombs decoration and they clearly surpass their local functions, being also deeply interconnected with their role as mayor.

Among these officials, we should consider, for instance, the case of Intef. As already mentioned his functions at the palace and at Thisis could have occurred simultaneously. Indeed, one must question to what extent the presence of the mayor at the provinces was required for its administration. Intef describes that he accompanied the king, which reinforces the idea of his absence from the region. The lack of information prevents us to learn how Intef’s network at Thisis worked, how frequently Intef visited the province, whether

he had special connections with the region or if that was not particularly relevant for the office, etc. However, as Moreno García (2019, 80) noted, the control over the provinces was not incompatible with the participation in state affairs and court life. As important as the royal favour at court was also the capacity of being integrated in powerful networks of patronage, enjoying the support of high-ranking officials (Moreno García 2019, 83).

It is also important to note that the majority of the known royal tutors for this period are associated with functions of the central administration and have different titles (Cf. Roehrig 1990, 78–198). In context, among the seven identified tutors only two were known to have been mayors during the reign of Thutmose III and this means that there is not a particular relationship between the two functions. Rather, it reinforces the idea that these guardians seem to have been chosen for their achievements and that the king entrusted his offspring to the most trusted and powerful courtiers administering the country (Roehrig 1990, 330–331).

tutors: Ahmose Humay (TT 224) and Min (TT 109) (Roehrig 1990, 189–198). In any case, one can also mention that the education of the provincial elite at court together with the royal offspring certainly favoured contacts that ultimately would result in the acquisition of prominent positions later on (Moreno García 2019, 79, 84).

While there is no further information about the familial background of some of these individuals, through this study, one can corroborate Shirley's (2005, 456) conclusion that the direct inheritance and familial nepotism were prevalent during the reign of Thutmose III and that the meritorious rise was not dependent on wartime activity. Nevertheless, the participation on the military campaigns seems to have been an important factor/strategy to gain closer access to the king during Thutmose III's and Amenhotep II's reign (cf. Martins 2019). It seems plausible that this reshaped, to some extent, the closer circles of the king and that became especially notorious during the latter's reign.

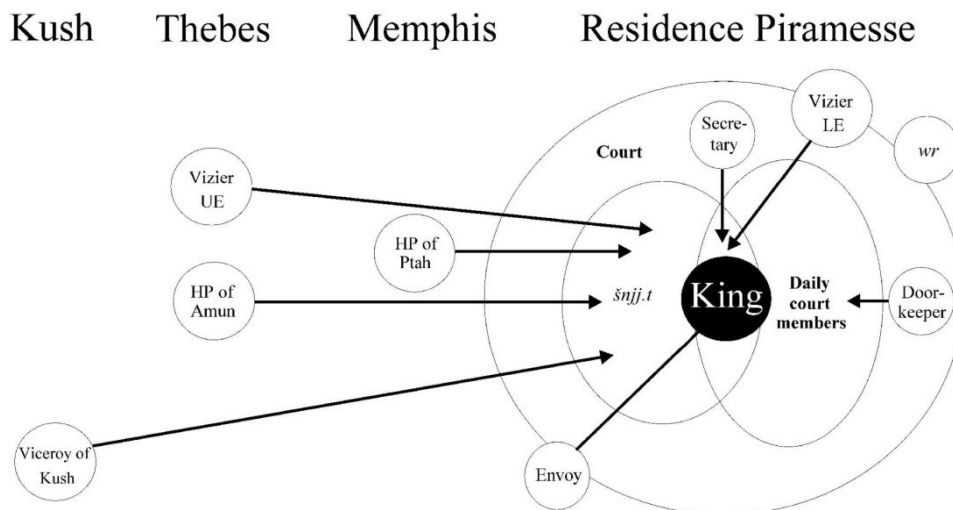


Fig. 1: The court and the residence of Piramesse.
(Raedler 2009, 137. Reproduced with permission of the author).

In this sense, Pahery and Min were responsible for the intellectual and physical education of the princes they received in their household but this responsibility was shared with other tutors. Amenhotep II had, for instance, at least, two

For a comprehensive representation of these circles of interaction, one can consider Christine Raedler's (2009, 137) model for the court of Ramesses II (**Fig. 1**).

Despite the different chronologies, it is possible to identify similarities and discrepancies. Her model of interaction is based on the premise of having a court centred at Pi-Ramesses. Even accepting the more ‘permanent’ nature of this capital (combining the administrative role and the military preparations), the principle of a “peripatetic pharaoh” (Snape 2014, 45) must also lead us to consider, even in this case, that the court, in its broader sense, is not exactly permanently settled in Pi-Ramesses. Through her study, one learns that the Sniit is the inner circle of counsellors of the king, while the court is all his entourage.¹⁹ The close court are those who are present daily, and the extended court the ones occasionally present (cf. Raedler 2009, 134–141). Taking these distinctions into consideration, I believe that for the reign of Thutmose III the Sniit could have been both a mobile and static structure. What I argue is that within this group there are a number of court-based high officials that maybe kept on moving with the king when necessary. At the same time, others like the mayors and other promoted officials from the army could have been the mobile component, in the sense that when the king is moving through the country, these are the ones who are closer to him. This may explain why the early-18th and mid-18th Dynasty kings are entrusting their heirs to these mayors as their tutors, but one cannot explain at this point the way that the transition between the *kap* (at Gurob) and the personal tutors functioned. In this context, for the New Kingdom, the members of the *kap*, the close relationships with the princes and future pharaohs could also have been an extended concept, not only geographically circumscribed but also open to the offspring of the mayors, while sharing the same household.

Preliminary conclusions

The study of regional administration is important to understand the political power associated with settlements, their physical and economic limitations, the nature of what we understand as a province and its role in the central government.

The mayors during the reign of Thutmose III were clearly interested in extending their families’ position and assuring that the influential political links were made. This is possible to infer through their marriages, the inheritance strategies or even how they get their titles, and also from their connections with the king. Being a royal tutor must have been an extraordinary position to promote their offices and to be influential to secure advantages for the members of their families. It seems plausible to argue that their strategies were regionally extended, bringing under their control different areas like the priesthood, or even associating regional offices with positions within the central government, as the case of Thebes is the most evident. The natural mobility of the central and local government seems to suggest that the court was an extended concept, not physically limited and thus not favouring a court-centred tradition (Cruz-Uribe 1994, 45). Also that the mayors were part of the inner circle of the king, although further study is required to better understand this dynamic.

It is not possible to identify during this reign and at a purely regional administrative level the favour of military individuals. The high-ranking families, most of them coming from the first momentum of favour in the early 18th Dynasty, were still in power and nepotism was a common practice. Albeit there is no indication for this period of a significant change in the bureaucratic system, even at a local level it is possible to identify the aim in “controlling” the priesthood (despite the major

¹⁹ This distinction is not made by other scholars like Lloyd (2014, 23–24).

favour that the military campaigns will bring to the Amun precinct) and also the subtle integration of military men in the regional system as it is the case with Dedi, who became chief of the Medjay and overseer of the western desert/foreign lands west of Thebes (Shirley 2011, 296–297; Martins 2019, 26–27). What seems clear is that the king assumes a pivotal position for the acquisition and distribution of offices. The favour of some individuals allowed that the new people entered in the administration and priesthood, a sphere traditionally marked by nepotism and inheritance. At the same time, the old elite families continue to gravitate around the king and the pharaoh reinforces or changes these

families' power. Between tradition and 'innovation', the reign of Thutmose III allows us to study these new dynamics, but it seems clear that there is no major change detectable in the regional administration concerning a reorganization with new favoured individuals.

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