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Elephantine Island: The Neglected Site A Case Study from Visitor Management Approach

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Abstract

Elephantine Island at Aswan Governorate is one of the unique archaeological sites in Egypt representing a historical timeline of Egypt starting from 3000 BC. Moreover, its location adjacent to two Nubian villages - Kotti and Sew - with their inhabitants makes the island a distinctive cultural site where tangible and intangible heritage are mixed together.

Nevertheless, the site suffers from negligence and poor interpretation, which on the one hand made the domestic and international tourists unaware of the major significance of the site. On the other hand, the local community is deprived of any kind of development.

In this paper, the authors aim to spot the main issues and opportunities of the heritage site on Elephantine Island. As a result of the research, the authors recommend four different approaches in order to develop the site from a visitor management approach: accessing the site, interpretation, community involvement and marketing.

The methods used in the analysis are mainly reviewing literature, making interviews and using the latest technology (GIS web mapping and 3D reconstruction).

Keywords

Elephantine Island, Aswan, Heritage Conservation, Heritage Site Management, Community Involvement, Visitor Management, Heritage Marketing

Introduction

Elephantine Island at Aswan Governorate is one of the unique archaeological sites in Egypt representing a historical timeline of Egypt starting from 3500 BC. Nevertheless, the site suffers from negligence and poor interpretation, which made domestic and international tourists unaware of its major significance.

In this case study, the authors are trying to spot the main issues and opportunities of the archaeological zone on Elephantine Island. The first part of the research is dedicated to determining the significance of Elephantine in relation to its location at the south of Egypt. In the second part the authors are concerned with analyzing the current situation of Elephantine by approaching the island from different perspectives, amongst all tourism and local community. The third part includes recommendations of the authors on how to better understand and protect the site in order to create a sustainable tourism through four different approaches, namely accessing the site, interpretation, community involvement and marketing. The fourth section is dedicated to the conclusion of the research.

The methods used in the analysis are mainly reviewing literature, interviews made with visitors and the local community, not only in Elephantine Island but also in other sites as Dahshur Necropolis, and interviews with technical specialists. Moreover, the authors used the latest technology to make a 3D modeling videos and images for the ruined monuments, and the GIS web mapping by measuring the site's monuments coordinates to create a website.

The Significance of Elephantine

Elephantine is the Nile Island located opposite the modern city of Aswan. This rocky, stretched island is the biggest in the island group of the first cataract.[1] On a granite outcrop at its southeastern end, the island contains the ruins of the ancient town of Elephantine, which was the capital of the first Nome of Upper Egypt and home of the triad Satet, Khnum and Anuket of Sehel.[2] This town dates back to the Middle Naqada Period 3500 BC and was inhabited until the early Arab Period, producing an archaeological tell.[3]

Fig.1 Location of Elephantine Island. Google Maps,
https://www.google.com.eg/maps/@24.0922779,32.8811899,4125m/data=!3m1!1e3, date accessed: 11/3/2015.

The name "Elephantine" was derived by the Greeks from the Ancient Egyptian name given to the island Abu, translated "elephant land", "elephant" or "elephant ivory".[4] The elephant-shaped rocks surrounding the island or the trade of elephant ivory in former times at that location could be reason for this name.[5] Nowadays Elephantine is locally called Geziret Aswan (Island of Aswan).[6]

On the west bank opposite the island the tombs of Qubbet el-Hawa, the tomb of the Agha Khan and the ruins of the Monastery of St. Simeon are located.[7]

Fig.2 A view on Qubbet el-Hawa tombs at the west bank of Aswan.
http://vb.chatal3nabi.com/imgcache/109812.imgcache.jpg, access date 22/3/2015.

The first excavations at the archaeological site of Elephantine took place in 1906 by Rubensohn, continued by Clermont-Ganneau, Strazzulli, Ed. Ghazouli and Labib Habachy.[8] Afterwards, the site has been systematically excavated and studied since 1969 by the German Archaeological Institute in cooperation with the Swiss Institute for Architectural and Archaeological Research on Ancient Egypt.[9]

The location of Elephantine Island gave it a strategic importance throughout history. First of all, Elephantine acted as an important commercial centre in Egypt. As the southernmost city within the Egyptian boundaries, Elephantine was the storing point for goods exported from southern countries[10] and it was the trading centre for granite, minerals and semi-precious stones quarried at Elephantine and the surrounding area.[11]

On Elephantine Island the first cult of goddess Satet was established during the Late Naqada Period. At that time, her

sanctuary had a very primitive form, consisting of a simple mud brick structure between three granite rocks.[12] The development of this sanctuary into a temple throughout time is a unique example that cannot be found anywhere else in Egypt.[13]

As part of the Egyptian territory, Elephantine played a role of expressing the centralized ruling power and authority of Egypt at that time by building a pyramid in the third dynasty and the continuous constructions at the temples and the town by different kings.[14]

1 Habachi, "Hekaib the Deified Governor," 10; Ziermann, Elephantine XVI, 12; Ikram and Knoblauch, "Elephantine and Aswan," 406; Habachi, Elephantine IV, 13; Habachi, "Elephantine," 1217.

2 Elephantine, 9; Habachi, "Elephantine," 1217.

3 Elephantine, 9; Habachi, "Elephantine," 1217, 1222.

4 Ibid.

5 Ikram and Knoblauch, "Elephantine and Aswan," 406.

6 Habachi, "Elephantine," 1217.

7 Elephantine, 41.

8 Habachi, Habachi, "Elephantine," 1217.

9 Elephantine, 5.

10 Ikram and Knoblauch, "Elephantine and Aswan," 406; Amin, Ancient Trade Routes, 24.

11 Habachi, "Elephantine,"1222; Habachi, "Hekaib the Deified Governor," 10.

12 Elephantine, 9; Habachi, "Elephantine,"1222.

13 Elephantine, 19.

14 Ibid, 10.

Another significant role of Elephantine was measuring the height of the annual inundation for taxation using the two Nilometers connected to the temples of Khnum and Satet.[15]

The site of Elephantine provides a wide range of historical and archaeological information due to its complex layers of history, which could be viewed at the 12m high profile of archaeological layers at the southern part of the site.[16]

Another significant aspect is the Heqaib's sanctuary, which represents an example of the cult of a private person established at a settlement. Heqaib was the governor of Elephantine during the reign of Pepi II. His sanctuary and cult were established after his death and they were of regional importance.[17]

Elephantine was considered as a garrison town and a fortress against any attacks from the southern borders.[18] It was also the starting point for the so called "Nubian Highway" to reach the second cataract.[19]

In 1902 a colonial style building was erected at the eastern part of the site as a residential and administrative building for the directing engineer of the Aswan Dam at that time. Later in 1912 it was annexed to the Ministry of Education and then in 1917 it was converted into the current Aswan Museum as the first provincial museum of Egypt. In 1958 a storage room and two halls were added to the building by Labib Habachi.

Right to the north of it another smaller museum, the so-called Annex Museum was built in 1991/1992 to display the excavation works conducted since 1969 on the island.[20]

Fig.3 Aswan Museum (left), Annex Museum (right). ©Nesma Ahmed, 2015.

Analysis of the current situation

To be able to understand the real situation on Elephantine Island, three factors should be taken into consideration: A SWOT analysis for the historic site, an analysis from the tourism perspective and finally how the local community, who live nearby the archaeological *tell,* see and appreciate the importance of the site.

The latter two approaches are considered as the two main issues related to the site and they are also of major importance according to researchers. Nowadays the heritage tourism is believed to be the driver of development in underdeveloped countries [21] and especially in Egypt; tourism has been considered as one of the most important economic resources. However, the tourism phenomena have to be controlled by "The Global Code of Ethics for Tourism", which was initiated by the UNWTO World Tourism Organization and by ICOMOS charter in 1999[22], in order to protect the local community from the bad impacts of tourism and not only realize the economic income but also the satisfactory intellectual being[23].

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15 Ikram and Knoblauch, "Elephantine and Aswan," 406.

16 Elephantine, 38.

17 Raue, "Sanctuary of Heqaib," 1; Elephantine, 12.

18 Habachi, "Elephantine," 1222.

19 Amin, Ancient Trade Routes, 25.

20 Elephantine, 57; Melek, (actual director of Elephantine Museum), interview by author, March 10 2015.

21 Brooks, "Heritage," 496.

22 "Global Code of Ethics."

23 Brooks, "Heritage," 497.

1- SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
• Limited area with clear boundaries • Uniqueness • Relevant historical value and heritage significance • Aesthetic value	• Very poor interpretation of the site, mainly for the reconstructed area • No visitor facilities • Very fragile site, most of it closed area	• High potential for different types of tourism (historic site + the village) • Different types of creative funding	• Tension between community and foreign excavation missions + Ministry of antiquities • Irresponsible tourism
Strengths	**Weaknesses**	**Opportunities**	**Threats**
• Archaeological value • high level of authenticity • Accessibility • Scientific value	• Signage unseen and of wrong material • Lack of information about the transportation to the island • Lack of funds • No marketing plan	• Untraditional site to visit • Part of master-plan for visiting Aswan made by DAI	• Lack of awareness by the community • Negligence of a management plan for the site. • Political instability

Touristic approach

In order to include the site of Elephantine Island in the visitation on the touristic map, it is important to compare the visitors' numbers in other two directly competing sites in Aswan, such as the unfinished obelisk as an archeological site, and the Botanical Garden as an island.[24]
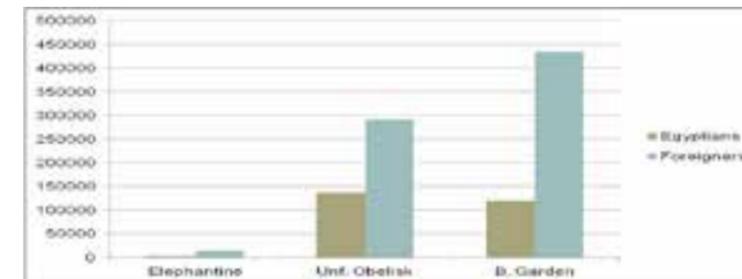
Fig.4 Comparison showing the number of visitors at the three sites in 2009.
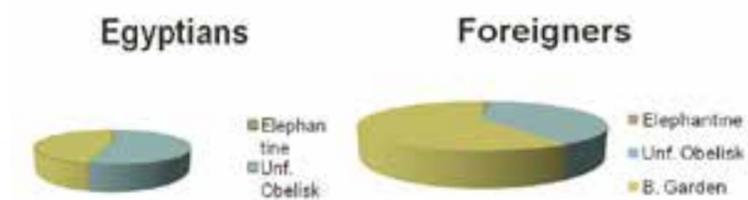
Fig.5 The share of Elephantine Island of Egyptian and foreign visitors compared to both competing sites.

From the comparison one could conclude the following facts:

1.   The number of Egyptian visitors is incomparable to the number of foreign visitors at the Unfinished Obelisk and the ratio is the third at the Botanical Garden.

2.   Elephantine Island doesn't almost exist on the tourism map compared to the other two sites. It is obvious that the site has been neglected from the Ministries of Antiquities and Tourism, tour operators, travel agencies and individuals. Consequently, the site badly needs a good management and marketing plan to attract both Egyptian and foreign visitors.

3.   Relation between the local community (modern villages) and the historic site

A.   The status of the actual modern village

The inhabited part of the Island is divided into two modern parts or *Naga'* separated by an agricultural land: the upper, *Kotti,* and the lower, *Sew*. After the construction of the High Dam during the 60s the number of dwellers has increased because the island wasn't flooded by the Nile water anymore and therefore had a solid soil for building houses

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24 Ministry of Antiquities, "Antiquities of Aswan and Nubia."

Nowadays the number of inhabitants is between 3500 and 5000 inhabitants, where half of them is working as sailors on Feluccas and motorboats for tourists. The other half are working in the tourism sector as transfers and guides. There are two mixed schools on the island: a primary school and a secondary one with 20 maximum pupils in each class.

It is worth mentioning that the state of infrastructure and services on the island is suffering from severe problems, such as collecting the garbage, the mosque's maintenance and the transportation to and from Aswan city. They are mainly conducted by the community through the donations of their local Nubian NGO: Development of Aswan Island. The reason behind this is that the island has no official mayor since the late 50s, so it has a minimum share of the governmentalbudget.[25]

B.   The site and the tourism from the point of view of the community

During the first half of the 20th century, the archeological site on Elephantine was considered as a nasty place because of the presence of crosses and sculptures – the remains of „paganism" – on some ruins. The few foreign tourists who visited the archeological site were seen as *kafry* (disbelievers) and they were unwelcome by the people. Due to the long history of colonialism, these visitors were considered as strangers from other worlds and scabies because of their different color skin.

With the beginning of the mass tourism in the second half of the 80s, this perspective has been changing because of the better education, the general awareness and the direct benefit from tourism. However, there are certain impacts of tourism on the lifestyle of the community. On the one hand there were negative impacts, like:

* Marriage of young people with old foreign ladies

* The decreasing value of education against the increasing value of gaining money

* The loss of many genuine traditions of the Nubian culture

On the other hand, there were positive impacts. The social and the economic level of some individuals increased through cross cultural interaction with foreign visitors and marriage with foreign young women.

As for the different types of tourism that could be carried out on the island, three types are suggested:

1.   Cultural tourism in the historic archeological part

2.   Socio-ethnic tourism in the modern village

3.   Eco-tourism, e.g., bird watching and information on botanical features in Lower Nubia

One of the successful touristic private projects on the island is the *Animalia* Museum, established by one of the intel-

lectuals from the local community. Animalia is a private bio-ethnic museum about Nubia and the owner offers three types of guided tours:

1.   Tour through the museum.

2.   Walking tour through the village

3.   Tour in the archaeological zone[26]

Fig. 6 Animalia Museum. ©Nesma Ahmed, 2015.

I.   Recommendations

In order to develop Elephantine site as an important heritage site that has been unfortunately neglected for many decades, the researchers suggest the following four different approaches:

1.   Accessing the Site
2.   Site Interpretation
3.   Community Involvement
4.   Marketing Campaign

1.   Accessing the site

The best way to access the site from the Nile is to establish a private marina for the site, on the east bank of Aswan city, provided with a big banner showing "Elephantine Island". Beside this marina, a kiosk to sell the tickets of the site could be established. Scheduled ferry boats are to be announced.

25   Abbas Hegazy, interview by author, February 13 2015.
Eng. Abbas Hegazy (60s) years is the cousin of the famous Nubian singer Mohamed Hamam and the nephew of the last mayor of elephantine in 1957.

26   Mohamed Sobhy, interview by author, February 13 2015.
Eng. Mohamed Sobhy (50s) is in the same time tour guide, Imam of Elephantine Mosque and the founder of Animalia, the private Bio-ethnic Museum, mentioned in international guides and trip advisor as the one of the most important attractions in Aswan.

Site interpretation

Presenting Information on the Site

After many interviews with local and foreign visitors,[27] the most desirable request is to have clear direction arrows and a simple site map, given with the ticket at the entrance from the ticket office, provided with the name of the attractions. Once they reach the monuments, the sign will explain the main features of each in a simple way.

As nearly everyone is using a smart phone, using QR code in front of the monument, which is linked to a website, is a good tool. As an example for this point, the website http://cultmap.cultnat.org/abu had been created for this case study. It is a web mapping solution providing information about the archaeological zone of Elephantine Island at its southern part using GIS technology.[28]

Another possibility is developing a mobile application about the island, where the visitor can get the information by entering the monument's name or number.

The researchers suggest some English and Arabic translations of the important Hieroglyph sentences engraved on the main blocks, e.g., the block that carries the title of god Khnum nb kbhw hry ib abw, which means "Lord of the cold water, who is the heart of Elephantine". The translation could be written on a banner installed beside the block.

Fig.7 Blocks of Khnum Temple. ©Nesma Ahmed, 2015.

As the site of Elephantine is suffering from limited space for reconstructions and the majority of the monuments is ruined and missing its original material, virtual aids, such as virtual reconstruction and Augmented Reality (AR), would be the best solution to restore monuments in a meaningful way so that visitors can understand them. An example would be using AR in showing the inscriptions and wall paintings of Satet Temple.

Fig.8 Inscriptions and paintings of Satet Temple. ©Nesma Ahmed, 2015.

A.   On-site Museums

(1)   Elephantine Museum

The researchers suggest that this museum, which is considered as the only colonial building remaining visible in Aswan, as well as the first provincial museum in Egypt in 1917[29], should be kept as a provincial museum. The following theme and scenario should be developed for the museum:

1.   Many rooms have to remain as a provincial museum, mainly for the finds of the site such as those of Heqaib. However, another room, mainly at the entrance of the museum at the center, could be transformed to an information office to provide visitors with maps, different tours, brochures, and local guides.

2.   Other rooms could serve as ICT center with a screen to display a film[30] of virtual reconstructions for the island and other interactive screens to get information and fun (as an example, a virtual reconstruction of the site had been made for the case study). The visit of these rooms is suggested to be done at the end of the tour.

3.   A Virtual reconstruction of the procession of Satet Temple throughout history could be displayed in one of the museum's rooms, as well as a virtual reconstruction of one of the houses of the Middle Kingdom and Khnum Temple [31] in the ICT room of the museum with an indication, on the map and on the sign, of the presence of this technology inside the Museum.

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27 See Appendix A.

28 See Appendix D.

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29 Melck, interview.

30 This film has been made for this case study to be displayed in the presentation.

31 These two examples have been done especially for the case study.
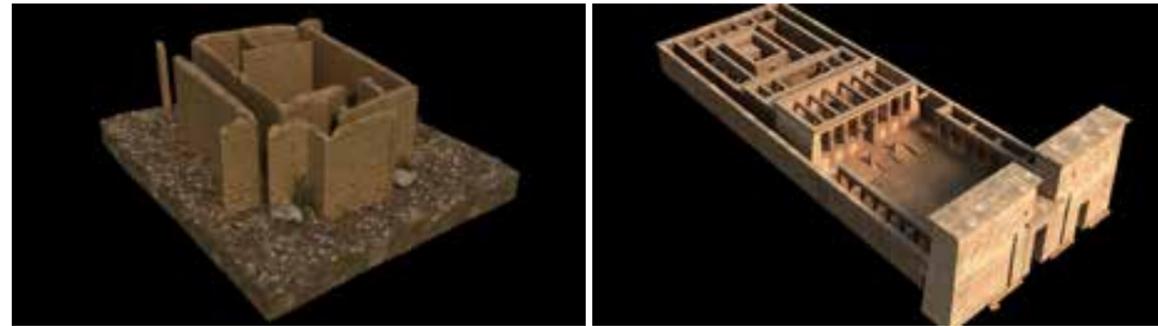
Fig.9 Virtual reconstruction of a Middle Kingdom house (left) and of Khnum Temple (right). After: Eng. A. ALY, CULNAT, using house plans published by DAI Cairo.

4.   The garden of the museum could be transformed to a pleasant cafeteria which presents some local refreshments and beverage to visitors, such as *Carcadé (hibiscus)*, Tamaris or Doom. This will be appreciated by visitors; especially after a tiring visit on the site under the sun (a free drink might be included in the ticket).

(2)   Annex Museum

At this museum information on excavations and reconstruction process could be offered to visitors at the end of their tour. One room might be for the reconstruction process provided with photos showing the work from 1969 to 1973. Another room with a screen showing a documentary film about the excavations and show cases of some excavation materials and equipment.

Fig.10 Satet Temple foundations from Old Kingdom (left) and from 18th Dynasty (right). W. KAISER, "Stadt und Tempel von Elephantine", MDAIK 28, pl. XL a and pl. 15.

B.   Signage

The actual problem of the current signage is divided into two parts:

a.   The ink used to print the text is of the same kind used in printed newspapers, which is very sensitive to sunlight.

b.   The glass covering the signs in contrary doesn't protect but it lets UV rays pass through it, which negatively affects the ink and make it disappear.

Fig.11 Examples of bad signage. ©Nesma Ahmed, 2015.

After interviewing two Egyptian specialists[32] in this domain and searching on the internet, two solutions that might be practical for the site were found out.

(1)   Silk-Screen Process

This method is the less expensive one. It is a printing method using oily based-paints applied on oil painted finished wood panel to create a flat surface. It uses the same ink used in writing text for publicity on pens, mugs, and even Ramadan lanterns.

For every sign, a silk screen mold should be fabricated (100x70 cm) with a cost that varies between EGP 200-500. The material of the panel might be MDF, compressed wood (*conter* in Arabic) or metal. It will be fixed on two iron bars with a horizontal iron frame that will contain the sign[33].

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32   Tamer Hawas (35 years), a painter, a graphic designer and a PHD student at the Faculty of Fine Arts, Helwan Univeristy; Ahmed Masrawy (42 years), MA in Applied Arts and specialist in Design of Mural paintings.

33   Ahmed Masrawy, interview by author, February 25 2015.

(2)   Laser Engraving

One of the recent techniques that can be used in information panels is the Laser Printing or Laser Engraving. This technique can be used on different materials, e.g., stone, wood or metal[34]. The best way of engraving is on metal, such as aluminum, copper, cobalt or steel, as they are durable materials and available in different types[35]. They are stable materials that can stand outdoors without being damaged by bad weather, sand or wind.

Another issue regarding signage is marking the difference between accessible and protected areas of the site. First of all, visitors should be informed before the visit and on the map they have that not all areas are accessible.

The difference can be marked with colored signs in yellow or red to catch the attention of the visitor. The sign should have a simple text in Arabic and English, explaining that this area is protected and why it is protected. In addition, it should contain a visual aid as a symbol.

Using the same colors, signs should be marked on the ground, too. Furthermore, a simple metal fence can be installed – where possible – to stop any try to step in.

C.   Visitation Routes

(1)   Route Bordure

a) Colored pebbles[36]:

A clear road from another material is important, so colored pebbles might be a good solution. They could be directly put on the original stone ground which forms the actual path.

Using the natural colored pebbles has many advantages:

1.   Vivid colors which will not fade out.

2.   They are water resistant, so they will create an isolating layer for the route floor.

3.   They offer a variety of designs in aesthetic forms.

4.   Numbers and arrows could be easily marked on them.This method is not costly (ca. 1/10 of the granite or basalt pavement price).

b)Environmental

Another solution would be using natural and environmentally friendly material as a route bordure, e.g., palm tree trunks.

Fig.12 Palm tree trunks. ©Maissa Moustafa, 2017

34 "Stone."

35 "Metal."

36 Masrawy, interview.

(2)   **Tours**

With a better marketing policy for the island, the site could be included in the tourist map as a half day visit, advised in the afternoon to avoid the harsh sun and to enjoy more the golden sunlight of this time of the day and its reflection on the monuments.

The suggestion is to offer two tours with different monuments according to the time of visitors (same fees or providing a second gate before the reconstruction area). It is worth mentioning that the Nilometers have been the main requested attraction to visit, according to the interviews held by the researchers with many visitors on the site from different nationalities. Thus, the suggested tours are as following:

a) The Long Tour (1 ½ - 2 hours)

1.   Nilometer of Satet Temple (10)

2.   Settlements and fortifications of the Old Kingdom (4)

3.   Blocks of Khnum Temple (with potential translation) (5)

4.   The Gate of Nectanebo of Khnum temple (13)

5.   Colored granite blocks of Khnum temple from the New Kingdom

6.   General view of the southern part (sector made by sebbakhin with an explanatory sign of what they did in the past) and the Gate of Amenhotep III (14)

7.   Granite Naos of Nectanebo with an explanatory sign

8.   Panoramic view of the city (17)

9.   Heqaib Sanctuary (view from above or inside with an extra ticket for specialized visitors with carrying capacity of max. 10 people) (18)

10.   Middle Kingdom Settlement (19)

11.   The reconstruction area of Satet Temples

(Finishing the archeological part with the visit of the reconstructed temples of 6th dynasty and 18th dynasty would be an awesome end for the visit. However, tour guides' explanations should be forbidden inside the temples)

b) The Short Tour (1/2 - 1 hour)

1.   Nilometer of Satet Temple (10)

2.   Settlements and fortifications of the Old Kingdom (4)

3.   Blocks of Khnum Temple (with potential translation) (5)

4.   Nilometer of Khnum Temple (7)

5.   The Gate of Nectanebo of Khnum Temple (13)

6.   Colored granite blocks of Khnum temple from the New Kingdom

7.   Granite Naos of Nectanebo with an explanatory sign

8.   Panoramic view of the city (17)

In the case of opening the two museums to visitation, another 30 to 45 minutes will be added to the tour.
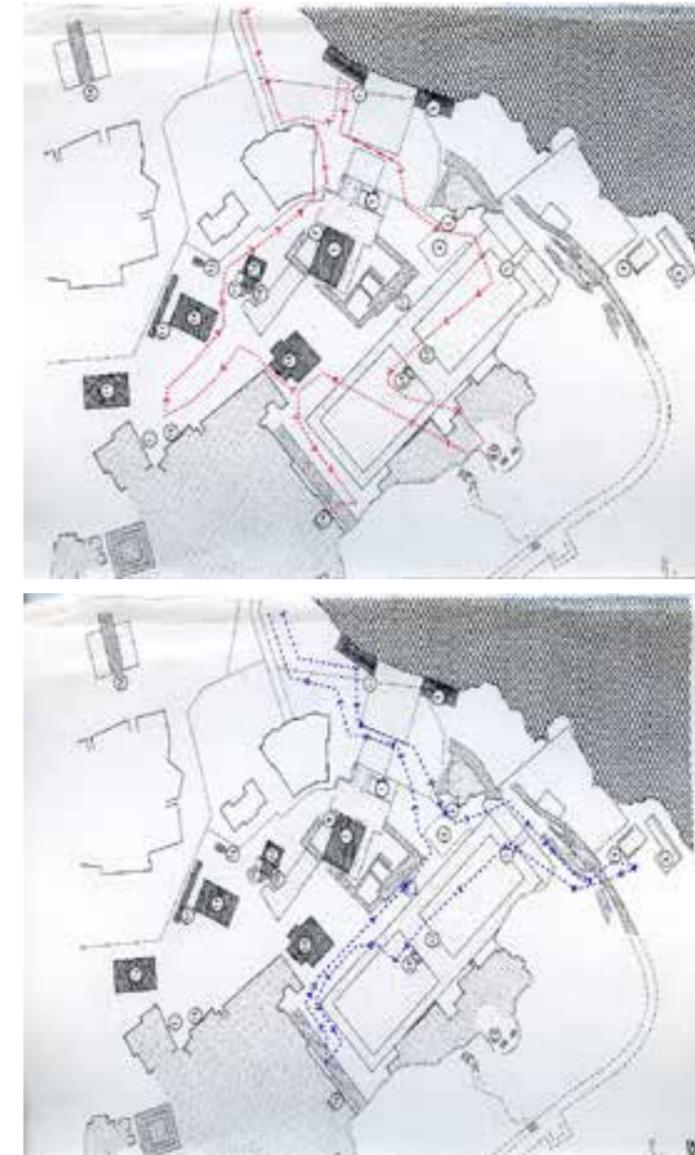

Fig. 13 Suggested long tour (left) and short tour (right). Elephantine. Die antike Stadt, *Offizielles Führungsheft des Deutschen Archäologischen Institus, Kairo, 1998, p. 55. Edited by authors.*

2.   Community Involvement

Credibility, Conservation, Capacity-Building and Communication, or the four Cs, have been adopted as main strategic objectives of the World Heritage Convention Declaration which was held in Budapest in 2002. They have been completed by a fifth C, for Community, by the World Heritage Committee in 2007 at its 31st session in Christchurch, New Zealand[37].

Since this time, Local community is considered as a strong stakeholder in any heritage site. They have a great role and importance to protect and develop the sites. Their roles usually depending on what benefits they get from the site and their involvement of the site. People living in the area of any heritage sites are part of the site itself and its heritage. For this reason, managing and planning the local community and increasing their economic level by involving them in the activities are effective ways to manage and protect the whole site[38]. Training programs conducted by professional people for the local community is very important to make them able to work in the tourism sector as a source of their income[39].

In order to make a good connection with the local community in elephantine island many steps should be done:

1.   Other stakeholders have to involve the local community in the decision making[40]. In Elephantine Island, the other stakeholders are the Ministry of Antiquities, the DAI and the Ministry of tourism that should be also considered as one of the main stakeholders.

2.   Local community should be involved in the tourism and conservation activities[41]. So, the site could provide local guides, from the island's community to make the tours on the island. Moreover, the DAI and the Ministry of antiquities have to hire people from the island in the conservation process after offering them many training courses.

3.   Stakeholders need to establish ways of communication between them to develop the site. That could be realized by a well-educated and well-connected site manager.

4.   Providing services have to be offered for the local communities, such as: the infrastructure in the island, enlightening the island and a recycling garbage project (pl. III). These are some services that other stakeholders can cooperate with each other to offer

Moreover, increase the awareness of people by giving those lectures, seminars, workshops which give them general information about the importance and values of the site[42]. Another important issue is to increase the role of both women and young people by involving them and offering some jobs that they can get benefits from[43].

A previous successful example was done in Dahshur Archaeological site by the UNDP /Spain MDG Achievement fund, under the name of "The Dahshur World Heritage Site Mobilization of Cultural Heritage for Community Development", might be taken as a model for training the local community. Unfortunately, the program's output was not continued because of the political problems of the country[44]. The training program should aware the local community and train them to be local tour-guides inside the Iasland, know their heritage and the importance of the Archaeological site.

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37 Albert, "Perspectives of World Heritage," 5.

38 Jamieson, "Challenges of Sustainable Community," 10.

39 Albert, "Perspectives of World Heritage," 44.

40 Bott, et al, "Stakeholder Collaboration," 35- 54.

41 Aas, et al., "Stakeholder Collaboration and Heritage Management," 30.

42 Pedersen, Managing Tourism, 15.

43 Knowledge Management, 9.

44 See Appendix C. Dahshur's local community "UNDP/ MDG training program", 28/02/2015.

Finally, one of the successful ways is to link the children with their own heritage and culture and raise their awareness with the values and the importance of the heritage place. They have to learn this in courses at their schools[45], as these children will protect the site when they grow up after knowing its importance. Visits to the site are totally important, with well-educated tour guides or well trained teachers to make them linked to the archaeological places and get information about them.

Fig.14 A workshop for school students on Elephantine Island organized by DAI. ©Nesma Ahmed, 2015.

3.   Marketing Campaign

The campaign will be divided into different phases according to the timeline planned. Each phase includes a number of activities that should lead to building awareness as well as attracting visitors to this desired destination.[46]

A.   Phase One:

The campaign will start with the "Introduce Phase"; this phase works on the awareness building targeting the consumer to know about Elephantine Island, its history, available monuments and any events organized. Therefore, a website for Elephantine Island will be designed to attract the visitors and can be used as awareness platform for the island in the campaign and hyperlinked in other famous websites for traveling such as Trip Advisor and Travel Egypt. Due to the lack of finance, activities are of low-cost such as digital ads and social media spread. Also launching awareness events is crucial to drive first time visitors to Elephantine through the technology that will be used such as GIS and Virtual Constrictions.

B.   Phase Two:

It will be focusing on reinforcing the island as "the go-to" place. In this phase we will focus on the message that visitor will receive, which is "Elephantine" is a must-see destination in Aswan. The success point of this phase is making tourists and local residents start heading to Elephantine as a historical site, hence attracting more visitors of different background and interests to know more

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45 Introducing Young People, 45.

46 "Marketing Introduction."

about Egypt's historic island. Due to the low budget, we can create effective and memorable campaign. Leveraging different media such as: Online media, including interactive ads and banners on websites, print media, social media, publicity, search engines and events held in the site.

C.   Phase Three:

Third and final phase is "Sustain," this phase focuses on stabilizing and maintaining the rate of expected visitors to the site. This is done through several activities such as including the site in different itineraries and partnership deals with entities such as Ministry of Tourism, Tourism Authority and Chamber of Tour Operators. Moreover, according to the competitors' analyses tables included in this paper of the Botanical Garden managed by Aswan Governorate, we recommend creating a partnership with the governorate. Elephantine Island can be bundled with other sites and we can start a new campaign called "Visit Aswan Islands" promoting the islands in Aswan.
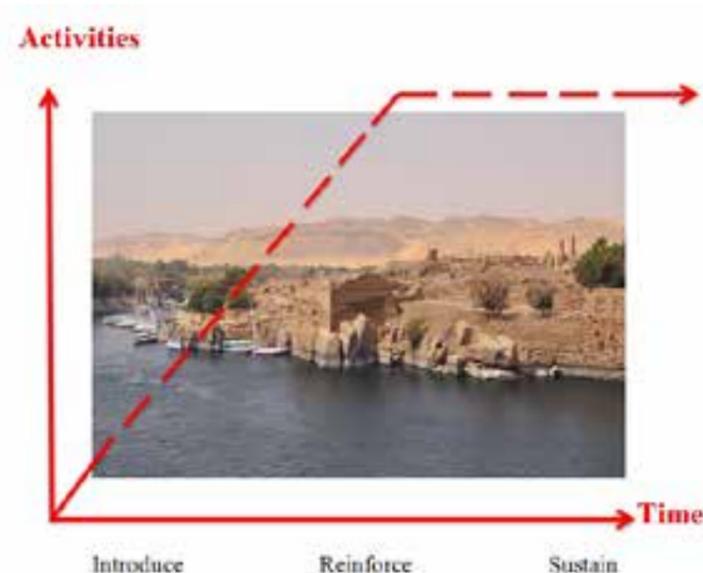

Fig.15 Elephantine island brand journey. ©Mariam Dawoud, 2015. Edited by authors.

Our target market segments are foreign tourists, domestic tourists, local residents, students and professionals as well. The foreign visitors who usually visit Aswan, for more than two days and stay in hotels, not in Nile cruise are considered an important target as well because they will be always interested to see more in Aswan, besides the traditional attractions such as Philae Temple,

the High Dam and the Unfinished Obelisk. The students and professionals are also important target audiences since the scientific value of the site is extremely significant and one of our main goals is to let the new generations know about their history.

Tone of Voice:

The campaign's tone of voice will have to be both modern and up to date to appeal to the target market yet keep the image of the heritage and old treasures it holds.

II.   Conclusion

Interpretation at heritage sites is about informing, educating or extending people's understanding of the site. It can be delivered in many ways[47]. The Society for Interpreting Britain's Heritage defined interpretation as the following:

"Interpretation is the process of explaining to people the significance of the place or object they have come to see, so that they enjoy their visit more, understand their heritage and environment better, and develop a more caring attitude towards conservation."[48]

A successful visitor management plan for a heritage site – as Elephantine Island – is the process of achieving the conservation of the site on one hand and the visitor satisfaction on the other [49]. A good interpretation of the site is important to increase the visitor's experience, but it is not enough.

In order to realize the main goal of the visitor management plan and to create successful sustainable tourism, many issues have to be considered, such as investing in place (permanent maintenance) and people (local community and staff in heritage sites), respecting their local rights and obligations, recognizing the significance of the heritage site and keeping on to preserve and protect it, looking after visitors' safety and last but not least responsible marketing and promoting[50].

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47 Haukeland, et al, Educational tourism and Interpretation, 4–7.

48 Definition by: Society for Interpreting Britain's Heritage, as referred to in Moscardo, 1998.

49 Agnew, Conservation of Ancient Sites, 143.

50 Australian Heritage Commission, Successful Tourism at Heritage Site, 2.

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