

Egypt Nov 18 to Dec 7 2019

Nov 18 to 19 A long flight from Chicago to Amman, then a short flight to Cairo. We were met inside security by the Egitalloyd representative who, with the driver, took us to the Ramses Hilton on the Nile. Our minibus had to pass the soccer stadium, where a big game was about to start, so the roads were jammed. The representative had been with us briefly in 2018, and seemed really happy to see us. At the hotel, we were given a refurbished room with a Nile view, which we love, and non-smoking, but with a shower instead of a tub.

Nov. 20 After a short night (from jetlag) and a nice breakfast, we walked the few blocks to the old Egyptian Museum and spent several hours there. A large number of artifacts had been moved out to the new Grand Egyptian Museum, in Giza, for conservation and eventual display, and they were painting and refurbishing the old Egyptian Museum so a lot of sculpture was wrapped and covered in drop cloths. They had done a good job of introducing new areas, in particular the exhibit of artifacts from Yuya and Thuyu's tomb (which was already set up when we were there in 2018). A special exhibition space had a good exhibit of the El-Gusus Cachette, a tomb of 153 elites, mostly priests and priestesses of Amun, discovered in 1891. We managed to spend time in the protodynastic exhibit, as well. Not surprisingly, we ran into someone we know who was not on our group tour...Tom Hardwick, the curator of Ancient Egyptian art at the Houston Museum of Natural History. He was giving his cousin a tour of the museum. Back at the hotel, we showered, rested, and had dinner in the hotel lounge, periodically enjoying the Nile view.

Nov 21. Another short night (from jetlag) and a nice breakfast, then we got our belongings together for the trip out to Mena House Hotel near the pyramids to check in and later join our group. Our Egitalloyd representative collected us, then we went to another hotel to collect a friend who was also on the tour, and he took the 3 of us out to Mena House. At Mena House, we were given a room with a view of the pyramids (and a bathtub!!); it was great. We walked around the grounds and took pictures. Steve wanted to go to the spa, but Judy feel asleep. We did a bit of luggage rearranging, then went to dinner with the group at 7:30 at the hotel dining room. Since we had already met most of the people, and knew some of them well, it was a lively meal. So lively that our organizers had trouble getting us to the table.

Nov. 22. Up early (jetlag still) and a great breakfast, then a lecture by our OI leader, Emily Teeter, who gave us an outline of the trip and more specifics about our time in Cairo, and introduced us to our Egyptian guide, Moufid. Then off at 8am for the pyramids, which were only a few hundred yards from the hotel. We did not go into the pyramids this time, since we had done so on all of our previous visits, and decided to save our leg muscles for later. Several of us wandered around enjoying the area while some people went inside, then we had a tour of the boat museum (Khufu's boat) and the tomb of Queen Meresankh III (4th dynasty, ca. 2558 BC) before going to the Sphinx. We had the amazing experience of being given a tour inside the Sphinx enclosure by Mark Lehner, who directs the Giza Plateau Mapping Project (and is Director and

President of Ancient Egypt Research Associates). He is a wonderful lecturer and showed us scale drawings of the Sphinx, in addition to leading us around the enclosure and telling us about the research, mapping, and some historical anecdotes.

We then had a so-so lunch at Abu Shakra (the dessert was flavor-free jello...we did not take it! The restaurant was chosen, we're sure, because it is close to the Sphinx and the staff is used to serving large groups, so not a lot of time is wasted. We were also given lunch here on the 2018 trip.) Then 40 minutes to shower and change before our group's after-hours private tour of the Egyptian Museum... 2 hours alone in the Egyptian Museum. It is so wonderful to be in the museum at night, with no other tourists. Our local guide gives a tour for people who want it, but we were allowed to wander around if we wished, which is of course what we did. Steve made real progress in his Ancient Egyptian studies and was very pleased. We left at out at 7pm and then went to dinner in New Giza at the restaurant Andrea Matriouya. We had also been given dinner in this restaurant in 2018. The seating is outdoors, so I took a sweater and was glad I had.

Nov. 23 We woke up a bit after 4 (Steve had been awakened in the middle of the night by the doorbell. A worker claimed we had requested more shampoo etc, and brought a whole bag of stuff. He didn't seem to care that we had not requested it so Steve took it...that meant that we were set for that sort of stuff in Middle Egypt! Judy slept through the whole thing!) and went to breakfast at 6:15. It's so wonderful to walk out into the crisp air just at dawn and see the light start to shine on the pyramids. There was a bit of mist at first.

Our first stop was the Islamic Museum, in a historic old section of Cairo (we had never been) and then "explored" the Old Islamic area of Cairo, walking from Bab el Futuh (1087 AD) along Muiz Street, the old main street of medieval Cairo. We toured the Qalawun complex (1279 AD), and then spent a lot of time in the Khan El Khalili, the large suq (market). We went to lunch on the patio of Studio Masr at al-Azhar Park, near the Citadel, where we had been given a lunch in 2018, and then through a terrible traffic jam back to Mena House so we could rest and repack before going to a nearby restaurant for dinner. After dinner, more packing.

Nov. 24 Another early morning, bags out for the trip south, and then breakfast. Our first stop was the conservation department of the still-unopened Grand Egyptian Museum (GEM). We first visited the pottery lab (some from the tomb of Tutankhamun were there), then we were allowed to peek through the window into the wood lab where we could see conservators working on the outermost coffin of Tutankhamun. Some of the funerary beds, a chariot, and statues, were also in the lab, and the model of Nubian soliders from Asyut was to the right. Last was the stone lab, which included a series of 6th Dynasty, painted plaster walls removed from an Old Kingdom tomb. They had been kept in the basement of the Egyptian Museum and had never been conserved or displayed. They were now secured with new backing and frames, and, once conserved, they will be displayed as a "lost tomb" at the GEM. We then saw a short video about the museum while the staff moved down the hall a large crate (from Goppion, a very high-end display case manufacturer in Milan). The GEM is now scheduled to open 10/10/2020.

From GEM, we drove for a little over an hour to reach the ruined pyramid at Meidum, started by Huni (last 3rd dynasty king) and finished in Snefru's reign (beginning of the 4th dynasty). Part of the pyramid had fallen down when it was being built so it was never finished. There are many famous artifacts from this area, including the famous Meidum Geese painting found on the wall of a "patio" We decided we would go into this pyramid, since we had never been, and it wasn't too difficult, though our legs complained. We climbed up to a corbelled area with hanging bats.

We walked around the area and were given a tourist book about the Beni Suef area. The bus drove us to the next mound so we could see the façade of the tomb of Nefermaat and Iket (ca. 2600 BC). We were given box lunches, which we ate on our laps on the bus. There was enough not-very-interesting food in each box for 3 people, but our tour manager collected the extra food to give away.

We now drove (about 3 hours because of the roads) through the beautiful desert to Minya where we spent two nights at the Grand Aton Hotel. We had police and military escorts all the way...one in front of us and one behind us. Our manager said the real reason for them was to get us through traffic, and it would have taken another 90 minutes without them. We had been warned that in Middle Egypt the hotels would be rather Spartan. We arrived after dark and walked along a little winding sidewalk that was lit by mushroom-shaped lights that lined the path. Internet did not work in the room, but I was able to get internet on my phone some of the time. We did not realize until the last morning that we had a lovely Nile view right behind the room. Here, we ate breakfast and dinner in the hotel, and of course the variety of foods was much less than in the tourist areas, but the staff was eager to please. Before dinner, Emily gave a talk on the "History and Culture of Middle Egypt;" dinner was in the same room. After dinner we fell into bed exhausted.

Nov. 25 We were up at 4:30, showered and had breakfast, then drove to Beni Hasan (our military escort increased dramatically!) to see the rock-cut tombs (ca. 2000 BC) of the First Intermediate Period, Dynasty 11 (Bakhet and Khety) and Middle Kingdom, Dynasty 12 (Amenemhet and Khnumhotep) (ca. 1956 BC). First was Amenemhet, with a large, vaulted roof painted with an imitation of mats, an intact fluted column (and another partially preserved), the walls painted with scenes of industry. The back wall had images of wrestling and warfare. Next Khnumhotep with more references to the king. The left wall had the famous scenes of Asiatics ("rulers of foreign lands") with their brightly colored clothes. Texts along the base of the walls (painted pink to simulate expensive granite) recorded Khnumhotep's restoration of temples in Menat-Khufu (ancient Minya). Then Bakhet with scenes of warfare with enemies, dancers, jugglers, and crafts. Finally, Khety with a beautiful carved pillar with a closed papyrus bud capital. The scenes were boats, dancers and singers, and wrestlers.

We drove further south to Tell el Amarna, a site we had always wanted to visit. Our box lunches were even worse than the day before, and didn't agree with Judy, who fortunately had eaten very little of it. We visited the north tombs (all about 1336 BC): first Ahmes, an unfinished tomb with scenes of soldiers bowing before the king; then Mery-Re, a large tomb with representations of temples at Amarna; the royal children, the king and queen in their chariots; presentation of awards; a large scene of the king

before a table of offerings with the Aton wearing a broad collar; Penthu, unfinished, with scenes of Penthu adoring the sun; Panehesy, which had later been changed into a Coptic church; good scenes of the royal family worshipping the Aton. From the tombs, we drove to the dig house of the Amarna Foundation. Because of the security, we were not able to enter the house, so Anna Stevens (assistant director of the excavations and senior research associate at the McDonald Institute of Archaeology at Cambridge) and Gretchen Dabbs (archaeological osteologist) came on board the bus to tell us about their work. They commented on the finds from the northern cemetery (located just below the elite tombs we visited), that this particular cemetery has a high percentage of young people and women, whose bones documented nutritional stress and that many of them, even young children, had arthritis from carrying heavy loads, presumably in connection with their duties constructing the city. We then visited the Small Aton Temple with its two reconstructed pillars, and then the Great Palace with its many pillared halls and a pool surrounded by pillars. (We saw the large painted pavement from this palace in the museum in Cairo.)

The drive back to the hotel was uneventful, and Emily gave a talk, "The Amarna Period and Egyptian Religion." Dinner in the hotel, and we had to pack up again for our next transfer, so had an "early" night.

Nov 26. Up early, luggage out. We finally saw the Nile view from our room (it was feet away but out our window in the back!), then breakfast and back on the bus. Our first stop was the wonderful little Mallawi Museum. We then drove to Tuna Al Gebel, stopping at the two colossal 14th century BC quartzite statues of Thoth as a baboon, then walking to nearby Hermopolis, a provincial capital since the Old Kingdom of Egypt, Hermopolis developed into a major city of Roman Egypt, and an early Christian center from the third century. The standing granite columns are the remains of the ruins of the Roman agora.

We drove to nearby Ashmunein, the necropolis for Tuna el Gebel. We visited the ibis and baboon catacomb (New Kingdom through the Ptolemaic Period) which housed animal mummies associated with the cult of the god Thoth. We then walked to the temple-like tomb of the priest Petosiris (300 BC) decorated in hybrid Greek-Egyptian style. Afterward, we visited the tomb of Isodora, a woman who drowned in the Nile. We ate our box lunch at the Tuna el-Gebel rest house; then we drove a little over three hours through the desert to Sohag, where we spent the night at the Safa Hotel. Emily gave a talk on "Egyptian Temples: Why and How?" and then dinner. Our manager brought around bits of pizza for us to test, and we voted to have that for lunch the next day instead of the not-so-interesting sandwiches we had been having (dry bread, cheese, no butter or mayo). We had a beautiful view of the Nile from our room. At night it was the lights of the town and from boats on the water, and in the morning we saw that there was a series of sandbars with lots of birds.

Nov. 27 Up early (4:30 am), showered, and tried to take photos of the birds on the sandbars, not very successfully. It was really beautiful on the balcony overlooking the Nile. Luggage out and breakfast. We were driven through town to Akhmim to the statue of Meritamun, daughter/wife of Ramesses II (Dynasty 19, ca. 1279 BC), (with our police escort...motorcycle and 2 trucks). Since it was market day, we were driven through the

market with vendors all around us, then walked 20 or 30 yards to the site. Everyone was waving and smiling at us. The site is sunken, so when we were down in the site, the townspeople stood around the wall at street level cheering and waving. Such rock stars. Our local guide said they see foreigners once a year or so, and didn't mind the police all over the place. The colossal (36 feet tall) statue of Meritamon was impressive; traces of the original paint remain. A colossal statue of Ramesses II stood to her right. Behind was a smaller seated statue of Ramesses.

We then drove to Abydos to the Temple of Seti I. We had been there once before, on the 2018 trip, so we already knew the basics of the site. Steve spent most of the time with the famous king's list (most of the kings from Menes (Dynasty 1) to Seti (Dynasty 19), with the omission of many of the kings of the Intermediate Periods, Hatshepsut, and the Amarna kings, who in the time of Seti, were considered to be illegitimate), while Judy wandered around taking photos and drifting in and out of the group. Before leaving the area, we went outside to see the Osireion, a deep pit with enormous building stones what was intended to replicate the burial of the god Osiris. A guard came over and told us we weren't allowed to be in that area, but our guide spoke with him and he let us stay.

On the bus on the drive to Dendara we had the cold pizza for lunch that we have voted for the night before. It was much better than the sandwiches. At Dendara we especially enjoyed the better guide we had on this trip. We climbed down into a crypt that we didn't know about before, and Judy stretched out on the floor twice to get photos of ceilings. After a very relaxing visit, we headed south to Luxor, where we spent four nights at the wonderful Old Winter Palace hotel. After checking in, we had a late dinner in one of the hotel restaurants. We did have a sliver of a view of the Nile from our room.

Nov. 28 This was a truly remarkable day. Up early and turned in our laundry before going to breakfast. Then Karnak temple. As we entered the first court, we were met by Jean Revez, professor of history at the University of Montreal, who is one of the directors of the Hypostyle Hall Project of the University of Memphis (the Memphis in the US). He gave us a wonderful lecture, pointing out, for example, that the middle row of columns in the hall are higher than the others and have open flower buds, representing more growth near the high windows. We visited obelisks of Thutmose I and of Hatshepsut, the Hatshepsut chapel, and the "Botanical Garden" of Thutmose III. We then met John Shearman, associate director of the American Research Center in Egypt for Luxor, at the Khonsu Temple and he showed us the newly cleaned chapels, and one chapel which was conserved by an Italian team. It had especially strong colors and plastic shields to protect the reliefs. Finally, for comparison, we visited a chapel which was not cleaned, to gain an appreciation of the condition before conservation. John then showed us the first court, with Herihor reliefs (end of Dynasty 20, ca. 1069 BC), a high priest of Amun who put his name and title in cartouches. We finished with a walk through the conservation laboratory founded by ARCE. We went back to the hotel for lunch at the restaurant by the pool, and then had some time to walk a few blocks to a free trade shop before we showered and changed for a wonderful lecture, tour, and dinner at Chicago House. This was a real high point of the trip.

When we arrived at Chicago House, two bright planets were shining over the Nile as Field Director Ray Johnson met us outside the compound and led us into the library and told us about the work of the OI's Epigraphic Survey. We then joined the staff and many archaeologists and Egyptologists from all over Egypt for a reception in the courtyard, followed by dinner. It was so interesting to be able to have quality conversation time with the archaeologists and Egyptologists, some of whom we had met before, about their work. Ray's partner, Jay Heidel, site manager for Luxor Temple, decided to join the group at our table for dinner, which made it even more special.

Nov. 29 Up early (5am), as usual, and got to see our sliver of a Nile view in daylight before going down to breakfast. We were taken in 2 small boats across the Nile and then boarded the bus (this saved a great deal of time, since the bus would have had to go south and across the bridge). Our first stop on the west bank was the quartzite statues, called the colossi of Memnon, from the temple of Amunhotep III (Dynasty 18, ca. 1400 BC). From there, we drove to Deir el Bahri, to Hatshepsut's temple (Dyn 18, ca. 1458 BC) It was packed (Friday). There were hundreds of school children, which we found interesting...it would be like taking an American class to a site on a Saturday...But it's a beautiful place, and we were able to go to all of the sites that we wanted to see, and not kept standing in the broiling sun as we were in 2018. Then on to Deir el Medina, the village where the artists who built the royal tombs lived in Dynasties 18-20. The town consisted of compact row houses, and in our 2009 trip, we were allowed to walk along the rows, but now that's all fenced off. We visited tombs of 3 of the artists, that we had visited in 2018 but not in 2009: Sennedjem (Dyn 20, ca. 1184 BC); Inherkau (Dyn 20, ca. 1184 BC); and Amunnakht: (Dyn 20, ca. 1184 BC)

Our next stop was Medinet Habu, the memorial temple of Ramesses III (Dynasty 19, ca. 1184 BC). Because the Epigraphic Survey was not able to come into the field due to the delay of their security clearances, Emily gave some background on the temple and the OI's work at the site. We had lunch at the Marsam Hotel under the trees in the courtyard; we were seated with an archeologist, so the conversation was especially interesting. The hotel has a very nice little shop that Judy particularly likes, so she had to shop there before we headed back to the bus.

At 5:30 we went to the Luxor Museum (we had never been!) that opened in 1975 as one of the first regional museums. It was originally curated by the Brooklyn Museum. The gallery for the Luxor statuary cachette was added in 2003, and a new wing opened in 1975. The exhibits were excellent, with good lighting and good labeling.

We were then driven into town for dinner at Sofra, a restaurant featuring Egyptian food. We were seated on the 2nd floor. Fabric draped open windows, so it was atmospheric. The President of Hungary had checked into our hotel, so buses were not allowed to wait outside the door for us to board. We had to assemble in the lobby and go directly to the bus.

Nov. 30 Up at 4:30 and showered, then enjoyed breakfast and the hotel before gathering in the lobby. Again we took a small boat across the Nile and boarded our bus for the drive to the private tombs. We first walked up a steep hill with a great view down to the Nile, and then visited 4 of the tombs: Sennefer, (Dynasty 18: Amunhotep II, ca. 1427 BC) which has great scenes of bunches of grapes painted on the uneven ceiling;

Rekhmire (Dyn 18: Thutmose III, ca. 1479 BC), with scenes of foreign tribute, a banquet with serving girls, and musicians, and scenes of industry (making statues, smelting copper, casting temple doors, a woodshop, making mud bricks, a construction ramp, and finishing a granite statue of a king); Ramose: (Dynasty 18, Amunhotep III–Akhenaton, ca. 1390–1336 BC), with a rock-cut forecourt leading into a rectangular chamber with restored rock-cut papyrus bundle columns and one wall decorated in the reign of Amunhotep III and then Akhenaton (Amunhotep IV) showing Akhenaten and Nefertiti at the Window of Appearances, and scenes of foreigners; and Userhat (Dynasty 18, reign of Amunhotep II/ Thutmose IV, ca. 1427 BC)..

We continued to the Valley of the Kings where was visited the tombs of: Tutankhamun (Dynasty 18, ca. 1335 BC); Ramesses V and VI (Dynasty 20, ca. 1143 BC); Ramesses IX (Dynasty 20, ca. 1126 BC); and Merenptah.

We then went to the Valley of the Queens and visited Amun-her-khepshef , a son of Ramesses III (Dynasty 20, ca. 1184 BC); and the wonderful Nefertari tomb (chief wife of Ramesses II, ca. 1279 BC). For the first time, we were allowed to take photos in Nefertari with cell phones (still no cameras). Fortunately the President of Hungary was going to other places on the west bank, so didn't delay us.

We returned to the hotel and had a late lunch in the garden of the hotel, and then at 5:00 Steve went to Luxor Temple (Amunhotep III, Tutankhamun, Ramesses II, with Roman additions) with the group, but Judy was tired so had a nice bubble bath and packed.

We had dinner in the garden of the hotel.

Dec. 1 Up early, bags out, and breakfast, before checking out of the hotel at 7 am and on the bus. This was an extremely long day: bus from Luxor to Aswan. We definitely prefer doing this stretch by boat; it takes 2 or 3 days that way, but it is so much more relaxing.

Our first stop was Esna, the temple dedicated to Khonsu and Khnum (a ram-headed creator god), and his consort, the lion-headed Menhyt. The temple is far below the modern street level. The sides of the temple were decorated with large-scale images of the Roman emperors (Titus, Trajan, and Domitian) smiting enemies before Khnum and Menhyt. There are late-period "cryptic" crocodile hieroglyphs. This was the first time Judy and been in the temple, and Steve had only been in at night.

Next was El-Kab (ancient Nekheb). The huge mud brick enclosure wall for the city, which we visited in 2009, was across the street from the private tombs, the latter of which dates from the late Second Intermediate Period into the 19th Dynasty. We visited: Paheri (Dynasty 18, reign of Thutmose III ca. 1479 BC); Setau (Dynasty 19, reign of Ramesses III, ca. 1184 BC); Ahmose Son of Ibana (late Dynasty 17–early 18, ca. 1550 BC). (The whole right wall of Ahmose was given over to a long autobiographical inscription in which Ahmose related his military campaigns against the Hyksos and the Nubians. He was rewarded repeatedly by several kings for his military success (bringing "hands") and in return he was given land, slaves, and "gold of honor." Emily did a dramatic reading of the text from a translation that Steve brought along); and Reneni (reign of Amunhotep I, ca. 1550 BC).

Next was Edfu where we walked through the great Ptolemaic Temple built by Ptolemy III. It was the first time we had been to Edfu without the dig director, Nadine Moeller, who was in Paris for the academic year.

After a very long drive, we arrived in Aswan and checked into the Legend section of the Old Cataract Hotel. Our room had one of the most beautiful views in the world, over Elephantine Island with the Nile in full view. Lots of birds were flying among the rocks and sailing boats in the river. We had time to shower and change before dinner on our own at the hotel.

Dec. 2 Up early and enjoyed the sunrise over our view. Just as the light hit the river, egrets flew up from their overnight perches and flew along the Nile. It was so beautiful, and Judy did not manage to get a photo. A good breakfast, then we met in the lobby of our part of the hotel to walk to a boat that would take us across the Nile. We were met by camels and rode them up the hill to an ancient ruined monastery of St. Simeon (7th century AD and later). We explored the monastery with its cells and refectory then came back down the hill on the camels to the boat (Steve says he never needs to do that again) and then we spent time at the ruins on Elephantine Island. We had been on Elephantine in 2009 and large portions of what we could do then are now off limits, but it was great to be there. We took the boat back across the Nile (a few yards) and had lunch in one of the hotel restaurants. We spent a couple of hours in the Nubian Museum before coming back to the hotel for a lovely dinner in the hotel.

Dec. 3. Up 4:30 am, again. Judy was determined to get photos of the egret flocks flying at dawn, but didn't manage any great photos. We enjoyed our view before putting our luggage out for collection and went down to breakfast. We were being transferred to the boat that would take us on our cruise of Lake Nasser, the Prince Abbas., which would end at Abu Simbel with a lake approach, which we have never done.

First, the bus took us to a boat launch that took our luggage to the boat while we were taken to Kalabsha Temple (late Ptolemaic and Roman...we had this on our schedule in 2018, but timing forced it to be cancelled so this was our first visit.) that was rescued from the flooding and moved by the Germans. Other temples that were also moved were in the same general area. The temple had a large (ancient) dock in front of it. The outside was unfinished, while the inner halls has scenes of the king (some of the images were of Augustus) before the gods, including the main god of the temple, Mandulis, who was shown as a human headed bird or a man, with an elaborate crown. We walked to the Qertassi kiosk, a small, beautiful Roman kiosk with elaborate columns and capitals. We then walked by a series of petroglyphs (Judy especially loved the petroglyphs!), and a large stela commemorating the battles of Seti I, commissioned by the "King's Son of Kush," Amenemipet (Dynasty 19, ca. 1294 BC). We walked along the path to the small Beit el Wali temple of Ramesses II that showed his northern and southern victories. After a quick look at the remains of the Gerf Hussein temple of Ramesses II (Dynasty 19, ca. 1279 BC) with its odd squat colossal statues, we went back to the boat to reach the Prince Abbas. This was the most relaxed part of the trip.

Shortly after we arrived, the ship cast off and we started south. The other groups that were on the boat had boarded the day before, and we quickly felt comfortable with them, chatting in the buffet line and seeing them at the sites. After lunch, Emily gave a

talk, "An Outline of Nubian History." The rest of the day we relaxed on the boat and got into the rhythm. Judy walked around the boat taking posed photos of people, for example. Of course we very quickly lost internet, so only had phone connections to the rest of the world.

Dec. 4 This was a very relaxing day, mostly on the boat, with the edges of land in view. We had meals on the boat, and relaxed and watched the water between stops. The sites we were visiting are only accessible by boat, and were rescued and moved when the high dam was built and flooded the area and created the lake. So, as with Kalabsha, sites had been moved together to save them from the flood. We had quite good food on board, and the egg chef was very attentive when I told him exactly how I wanted my egg, for example. Since it was a buffet at every meal, we loaded up on wonderful persimmons and figs and dates that were fresh and delicious. We were disappointed in the rooms, since we had been told it was a high-end boat. It was a cute boat, but not particularly comfortable. At each stop, we were ferried ashore by a motorboat.

Our first stop was the temple at Wadi Sebu, built by Ramesses II in year thirty-eight of his reign. (It had been moved 4 km for the original location.) We took a tractor cart up the hill to the Dakka Temple (Ptolemaic, Roman), which was moved more than 100 km to its present location. We walked down the hill to the Roman-era Maharraqa temple that was dedicated to Serapis and other gods. The temple was never finished, and the column capitals were only roughed out. We returned to the ship for a falafel sandwich break (no shortage of food!)

After lunch, we took motorboats to Amada Temple (Thutmose III and Amunhotep II, with Amarna damage repaired by Ramesses II). The temple was moved in one piece, on rails, by the French. It had a mud brick pylon with stone doorjambs. We walked to the Derr Temple (Ramesses II, Dynasty 19, ca. 1279 BC) and then to the a small tomb of the official Pennut (Ramesses VI, Dynasty 20, ca. 1143 BC).

Dec. 5 We slowly passed Qasr Ibrim, an island that was once an important fortification and religious site. Before lunch, Emily gave a recap of our trip, reviewing all the sites we visited.

After lunch, as we approached Abu Simbel (Ramesses II, Dynasty 19, ca. 1179 BC) we all gathered at the front of the boat and took photos. It was memorable. We docked around the north end of the structure, and in the afternoon we walked the few hundred yards to the entrance, and then we could spend as much time as we wanted at the site (big advantage over our other trips where we were flown in and had to catch the plane back so had a very limited time at the site.) The only downside was that since we were there in the afternoon, we had lost the sun on the face, so the grand photography wasn't as great. But the tradeoff of having as much time as we wanted was worth it. Steve was able to spend the time he needed on the hieroglyphs and felt he had found all of the glyphs that he wanted. The other advantage was that we got (for the first time) the Sound and Light Show, which was really fun. Afterward, we just walked back to the boat and then had a really great dinner.

Dec 6 A very relaxed travel day. Breakfast, luggage out at 9, out of the rooms by 9:30, and left for the airport at 10:30. We had had issues with security at Abu Simbel before,

but this time everything was very smooth. We had to shift seats around in our group so couples could sit together, but that actually worked out well. It turned out that the tour manager had booked out the entire “business” section for our group, which meant that we were given a juice box and a snack. We landed in Aswan and then continued on the same plane to Cairo without having to change out our seats. When we arrived in Cairo, we checked in at the Intercontinental City Stars in Heliopolis and had an excellent farewell Egyptian dinner at El Khal in the hotel.

Dec. 7. Up at 3:30am. We were offered a breakfast box, but declined (fortunately, since it was a huge box with a few odd things in it.) At the airport we had many many securities, but no issues. And then a “short” flight to Amman, a not-very stressful layover, and then a long flight to Chicago (13 hours.)



View from Mena House



In the Sphinx Enclosure



Medum



Hermopolis



Akhmim



Amarna



Edfu



Elephantine from our room at the Old Cataract Hotel



First cataract from Elephantine summit



Landing at Abu Simbel