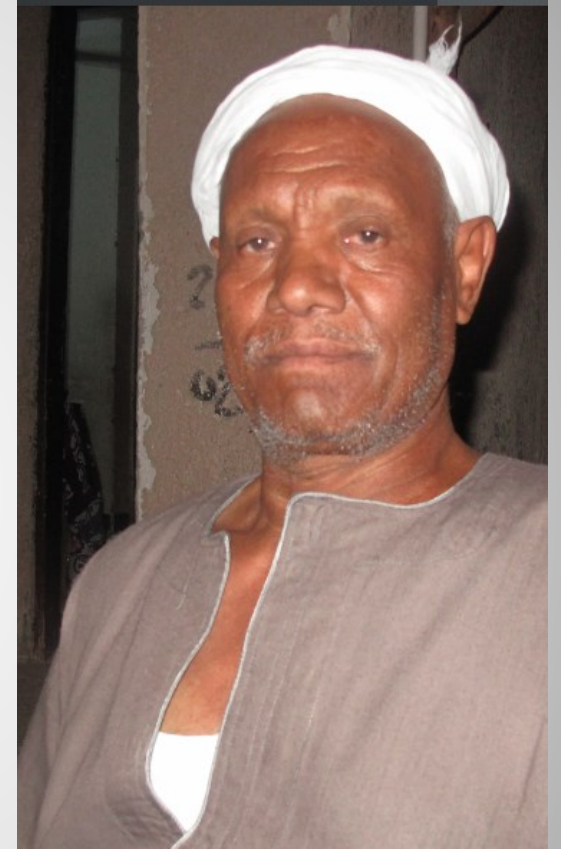


**Expanding oral history access
through a transcription and
translation initiative:
The Qurna Hillside Oral History
Project at AUC**



**Stephen Urgola, Rare Books & Special Collections
Library, The American University in Cairo**

AMICAL 2022 Community Idea Exchange



Documenting lives of older relocated villagers across
the Nile from Luxor in southern Egypt

Qurna Hillside Oral History Project



Team from AUC conducted 70 digital audio interviews in 2016, aided by local partners

Qurna Hillside Oral History Project



THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN CAIRO
الجامعة الأمريكية بالقاهرة

Rare Books and Special Collections Library
مكتبة الكتب الأثيرة و المجموعات الخاصة



مشروع التاريخ الشفهي لهضبة الجرنه Qurna Hillside Oral History Project

Transcript of oral history interview conducted with
Hasaan Hassan Al-Khabir on April 4, 2016 for the
Qurna Hillside Oral History Project

النص لمقابلة التاريخ الشفهي تمت مع
حسان حسن الخابير في 4 ابريل 2016
لمشروع توثيق التاريخ الشفهي لهضبة الجرنه

[00:00:00]

المحاور ميتا ابراهيم:
موافق، إني اسجل ميتا ابراهيم أسجل مع حضرتك، أكلم مع حضرتك عادي على؟

المقابل معه حسان حسن الخابير:
ايوه اكلم عادي إحنا مافيش حاجة.

المحاور ميتا ابراهيم:
خلاص تمام ماشي.

المقابل معه حسان حسن الخابير:
إني كنت شغال في منطقة اسمها الأشراف راموزا، بتسجل على كده؟

Oral history interviews were transcribed with support
from AMICAL Small Grant

Qurna Hillside Oral History Project



Object Description

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Title (English) | Mahmoud Ahmed Sayed Abdel Rahman Interview |
| Title (Arabic) | مقابلة محمود احمد سيد عبد الرحمن |
| Interviewee (English) | Mahmoud Ahmed Sayed Abdelrahman |
| Interviewee (Arabic) | محمود احمد سيد عبد الرحمن |
| Interviewer | Mohamed Farag |
| Date | 2016-05-02 |
| Description (English) | <p>Mahmoud Ahmed Sayed Abdel-Rahman, a retired 75-year-old former resident of the Qurna hillside, describes his life experiences. Coming from the Abdel-Rasoul clan, known for its association with ancient monuments of the Luxor area, Mahmoud outlines the work of his family in the tourist trade, and his own work in ticket offices at local tourist sites. He offers an account of how residents of Qurna had long interacted with tourists, and relates how younger residents more recently relocated to work in tourism in distant parts of Egypt like Sharm El Sheikh, or took on jobs in other professions; he mentions the education and careers of his own daughters as well. Mahmoud describes life in old Qurna, including wedding traditions, moulid festivals, games, and changes over the years in areas like farming and the availability of water and electricity. The displacement of residents from old Qurna is covered, including the demolition of the old houses; he compares these with the new housing provided, and speaks of the current levels of pollution not found in the old village.</p> |
| Description (Arabic) | <p>يصف محمود أحمد سيد عبد الرحمن ، المتقاعد البالغ من العمر ٧٥ عامًا والمقيم سابقًا في تلال القرنة ، تجاربه الحياتية. يتحدث محمود من عشيرة عبد الرسول المعروفة بتباطؤها بالآثار القديمة في منطقة الأقصر ، ويوضح عمل عائلته في التجارة السياحية ، وعمله الخاص في مكاتب بيع التذاكر بالمواقع السياحية المحلية. يقدم وصفًا لكيفية تفاعل سكان القرنة لفترة طويلة مع السياح ، ويروي كيف انتقل السكان الأصغر سنًا مؤخرًا للعمل في السياحة في أجزاء بعيدة من مصر مثل شرم الشيخ ، أو شغلوا وظائف في مهن أخرى ؛ كما يذكر تعليم ومهن بنائه أيضًا. يصف محمود الحياة في القرنة القديمة ، بما في ذلك تقاليد الزفاف ومهرجانات المولد والألعاب والتغيرات على مر السنين في مجالات مثل الزراعة وتوافر المياه والكهرباء. تمت تغطية تهجير السكان من القرنة القديمة ، بما في ذلك هدم المنازل القديمة ؛ يقارن هذه المساكن الجديدة المقدمة ، ويتحدث عن مستويات التلوث الحالية غير الموجودة في القرية القديمة.</p> |

Oral History metadata applied in English and Arabic
Qurna Hillside Oral History Project

**English Translation of Transcript of Arabic oral history interview conducted with
Mohamed Ahmad El-Tayeb on April 23, 2016 for the
Qurna Hillside Oral History Project**



[00:15:00]

Interviewer Mohamed Farag:

Um, how did the end of the annual flooding of the Nile change people's lives?

Interviewee Mohamed Ahmed El-Tayeb:

My father, may his soul rest in peace, used to tell me those stories. When there were floods people went to the top most of the mountain to live in the stone doors [these were doors into the stone hillside – these were tombs that the Qurnawis used as part of the house]. To live in these stone doors means that we used to live in it, each family had these stone doors. [They lived there] till when the floods passed. [Sound of motor and women's voices]

AMICAL Small Grant supported translation into English
Qurna Hillside Oral History Project

The Necropolis Guard and The Duat at Dusk

Nestled in the lower slopes of the hills behind the Theban Necropolis lay several abandoned villages, as the majority of their people had left after being forced to relocate. Mud brick houses with honeycomb-looking walls of caves in which thousands of residents once lived sit atop and next to tombs of nobles, including various New Kingdom pharaohs' most trusted and loyal viziers, treasurers, and keepers of vineyards. Separate houses with the same honeycomb walls and mud brick architecture can be found on the plethora of royal tombs, statues, and valleys that you can read about and hope to visit to become a resident of this place — El Qurna, or to locals, El Gourna — and being the name of the pyramidal hill where



Process Memo

The original inspiration for the first draft of this story came from the Rare Books and Special Collections Digital Library's "Qurna Hillside Oral History Project," wherein residents who had been relocated shared information about life in Qurna and shared memories. The two oral histories I found to be especially informative in helping me craft this story were the interviews with [Gamil Gereis Boktor](#) and [Fatma Ahmed Taber](#), as both discussed a belief in the supernatural in some way and also shared encounters with spirits/ghosts or "goblins," as one of them refers to it. This stemmed from the notion that the land they lived on was "possessed" and the site of ancient nobles, as well as a former battleground.



Challenges: Local dialects

Usage: Linguistics study, Student fiction for class

Qurna Hillside Oral History Project



Qurna Hillside Oral History Project



Qurna Hillside Oral History Project مشروع التاريخ الشفهي لهضبة الجرنة

About this collection

The Qurna Hillside Oral History Project documents the lives and experiences of residents relocated from their homes on the West Bank of the Nile near Luxor. Qurna has long been a focal point of interest, prominent for its hillside location near ancient sites and its decorated houses. A government attempt in the 1940s to move the residents to a new settlement designed by architect Hassan Fathy failed, but from 2006 to 2008 numerous village houses were demolished and their residents relocated. The oral history recordings and transcripts in this collection are the product of a series of interviews conducted in spring 2016 by a team of student and library staff oral history interviewers from The American University in Cairo, assisted by two local liaisons, who visited former residents in their new homes. The more than seventy interviews, many with elderly men and women, addressed their upbringing, work, family life, material culture, and traditional practices in areas like religion and medicine. Also covered are encounters with outsiders like tourists and archaeologists, as well as the interviewees' experience of their relocation. The interviews were conducted in Arabic (with interviewees typically speaking in local dialect); for some interviews access must be requested from RBSCCL staff. This project was a joint effort between AUC's Rare Books and Special Collections Library and Caroline Simpson's Qurna History Project, and made possible by an AUC Faculty Research Grant and an AMICAL Small Grant.

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Qurna Hillside Oral History Project