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## **The Touristic Role of the Scidia Canal in the Graeco-Roman Period**

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### **Abstract**

The Scidia canal contributed to transport the tourists to Canopus during the religious ceremonies that were held in honor of the god Serapis and the goddess Isis, so the water carnival along the canal to Canopus was attracting tourists. The branch that comes out of the Scidia Canal is three and a half kilo meters from Eleusis, was heading to Canopus on the narrow high side on which Alexandria and Abu Qir are located, and there isn't any trace of this branch now. As for the Canopic path of the Canopy branch, it reached Canopy in a direction parallel to the beach starting from Pharos to the Canopic estuary, and according to Strabo's description, there was a temple of the god Serapis in this city, and the Alexandrians went to visit that temple in Canopus through the canal.

This paper deals with the touristic role of Scidia canal during the Graeco-Roman period. This study also reviews the touristic role of the canal represented in Nile tourism as well as religious tourism through its handling of the ceremonies and religious rituals held in the temples of Canopus and Menouthis. This study sheds light on recreational tourism and the water carnival held during the celebrations, which was a point of attraction for tourists, whether from Alexandria or others. This study depends on this subject on the statements of historians and nomads, as well as dealing with some papyrus and Proving by archaeological evidence.

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### **Introduction**

Canopus is an ancient Egyptian city located east of Alexandria, at the estuary of the Canopic branch of the Nile. Canopus now occupies the Abukir Peninsula, a small area in the northwest of Egypt (Othman,2020,96).This city is not on the banks of the Nile but is located very close to the far west of the seventh branch of the Nile, known as the Canopic branch (Pline,V,34,1).In ancient Egypt, Canopus was called Pe Gewat, and by the time of the Greek and Roman periods, its name had changed from Pe Gewat to Canopus. (Bunson,1991,80)

The Canopus way was probably named after canobus, the legendary Homeric navigator who piloted the fleet of Menelaus in the Iliad (Strabo XVII,I.17). According to a Homeric myth, the town of Canopus in Egypt was founded by Menelaus, who named it after the pilot of his ship who died on its shore. Homer says that Menelaus built a shrine to his memory there,

around which the town was later developed. (Bauval, Hohenzollern, 2014, 18). As for the location of the city of Canopus, Strabo mentioned that it is situated at a distance of one hundred and twenty stadia by land from Alexandria Alexandria (Strabo XVII,I.17), there are other narrators who estimated that the distance between the two cities was 12 miles, about 17 km (Ammianus Marcellinus. XXII.16).

The Scidia canal contributed to transport the tourists to the city of Canopus. During the Ptolemaic period, Canopus was one of the most important religious centers in Egypt that made many tourists and residents of Alexandria attended it during the celebrations. They were transported through this canal that was used to connect Alexandria with the city of Canopus (Foertmeyer,1989,188).

## 1. River Tourism in the Graeco-Roman Period

The large number of festivals in the cities of Canopus and Menouthis were considered as means of attracting many Egyptian and foreign tourists who enjoyed their time through these holidays and recreational celebrations, even if their essence was religious. Marine and river tourism (boat tourism) is represented by the movement of tourists from the source area to the target area a sea or river transport " boats", That boat tourism is an old mean of transportation as people have been traveling in rivers and seas for different purposes since ancient times (Prideaux,, 2009,106). Boat tourism meets the need of tourists for comfort, cognitive and sports interests and luxury in filling time.(كافى، ٢٠١٥، ٤١).

## 2. Water Transport in Egypt in the Graeco-Roman period

River transport was a type of water transport in Egypt in the Graeco-Roman period and is considered one of the urgent necessities imposed by the country's geography(السيسى، ١٥٤، ٢٠٠٠). As for the Nile boats used in river tourism, despite the lack of information available in the field of accurate detailed description of the Ptolemaic boats and ships, their internal imaging and the method of their use in various tasks, we can confirm that these types of boats were not far from those which used in previous periods (El Weshahy, Halim 2021,128). As the Egyptians in their early ages began to deal with the water spaces with a type of boat or primitive boats made of papyrus stems, and these boats were simple to make and were used in the crossing of the Nile river from one side to the other, and there were no oars at this stage, as the hands and feet of the passengers of these ships were used in the performance of this task. (المسيري، ٢٠٠٢، ١٦٨).

The Egyptians began to develop this type of boat and the beginning of development was the use of wood in the manufacture of oars, and this was followed at a later stage by the discovery of the ability of the wind to drive the boat and then the use of the sail alone or alongside the oar. At a later stage, the Egyptians continued to develop their boats by using one of the paddles at the rear of the boat to play the role of the rudder in determining the directions of the ship. In the development, long-distance boats were provided with seats. Sources indicate that Egyptians' knowledge of sail boats dates back to prehistoric times.(المسيري، ١٦٩، ٢٠٠٢).

The development of boats building and their various uses continued in the age of the dynasties. The boats were characterized by the height of their rear clearly. The paddles were used in the rudder and performed the same task. The front of the boats was made in the form of a papyrus or the head of one of the animals. The mast of the ship consisted of two high uprights that meet at the top. The sail was a square or rectangular piece of thick cloth.

The upper edge of the sides of the boat was surrounded by thick ropes so that the strength of the boat could be increased (Anderson,1987,78).In the late age and early Ptolemaic period, boats continued to appear in the same forms and with the same previous uses, as the boats

used in the Ptolemaic period were only an evolution of the known style of the trireme (El Weshahy, Halim 2021,128). There were recreational equipment added to the boats allocated to kings and princes as well as in the ships transporting passengers. There were ships equipped with two or more cabins dedicated to VIPs or passengers (المسيري، ٢٠٠٢، ١٨٣)

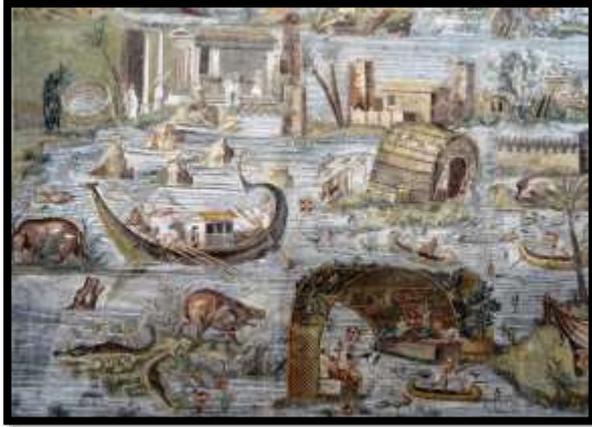
Perhaps one of the most important sources that dealt with ships and boats in the Ptolemaic period is the papyrus, which confirmed the continuation of the industry of ships and boats in the same way as it was in the ages of the pharaohs. A papyrus document (P.Hibeh) dates to 250 BC confirms that the boat industry of papyrus stems continued in the Ptolemaic period and was meeting the country's need for this type of boat, which was used in crossing short distances in rivers, canals and swamps. (المسيري، ٢٠٠٢، ١٨٤)

The boats were represented on some art pieces dating back to the Greco-Roman period (Jasnow,R.,1999,165). The shapes of ships and boats from the Egyptian environment were represented on a piece of an Alexandrian-embracing Roman mosaic known as the "Palestrina" (fig.1) near Rome (La Malfa, 2003, 269). They were 5.25 meters long and 6.65 meters wide (محمود، ٢٠٠٠، ١٩٩). This uniquely important mosaic originally formed part of the floor of a building in the Italian town of Praeneste (Palestrina) (Burkhalter,F.,1999,230).



**Fig.(1):** The Palestrina mosaic : A variety of boats is depicted on the river and its banks are lined with different kinds of religious and secular building.  
After (Bowman,1990,12,fig.7)

It dates to the early first century BC (Bowman, 1990,12). The scenes that were depicted on that piece were taken from the Nile and Alexandrian environments, where it showed the Nile boats (محمود، ٢٠٠٠، ١٩٩), and the boats in this Mosaic are similar to the boats on a mosaic piece discovered in Canopus (Breccia, 1926,110). In this Mosaic, Nile boats and naval ships were appeared (Meyboom, 1995,14).



**Fig.(2):** The great Variety of boats on the river includes skiffs mosaic, cargo boats, a warship and a hunting ship

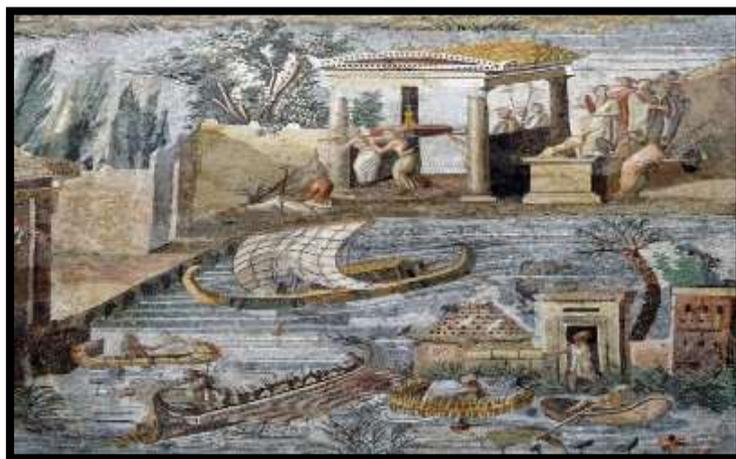


**Fig.(3):** Festivals boats in the Palestrina. After. (Bowman,1990,71, Fig.45)

After. (Bowman, 1990,119, Fig.71)

Nile sailboats were depicted in the middle part of the Mosaic, as we see in the (figure:2), which is characterized by the height of both the front and the rear of the ship (محمود، ٢٠٠٠، ١٩٩)، as well as three Nile boats in the bottom of the mosaic, which are simple in shape, made of papyrus, and characterized by the height of both the front and the rear of the boat. (Bowman, 1990,12)

It is also noticeable to represent a river ship in the lower western part (fig:3), which is characterized by the height of the front and rear of the ship (محمود، ٢٠٠٠، ١٩٩). It also represented the rudder at the rear of the ship, which is a single paddle. It also represented a number of paddles and the cabin on the deck of the ship. (F. Moffitt, 1997; محمود، ٢٠٠٠، ١٩٩).



**Fig.(4):**Forty oars ships  
After.(Burkhalter,F.,1999,Fig.7,260)

Also, a ship was represented from the eastern side (fig4) in the lower part of the Mosaic, which is a naval ship, because it is located on the shores of Alexandria and is characterized by the height of both the front and the rear of the ship, and the front takes the shape of the head of one of the animals as it was prevalent in the models of that stage with two Nile boats above it, which were characterized by the presence of the sail in the upper part of the ship, the height of both the front and the rear of the ship (محمود، ٢٠٠٠، ١٩٩).

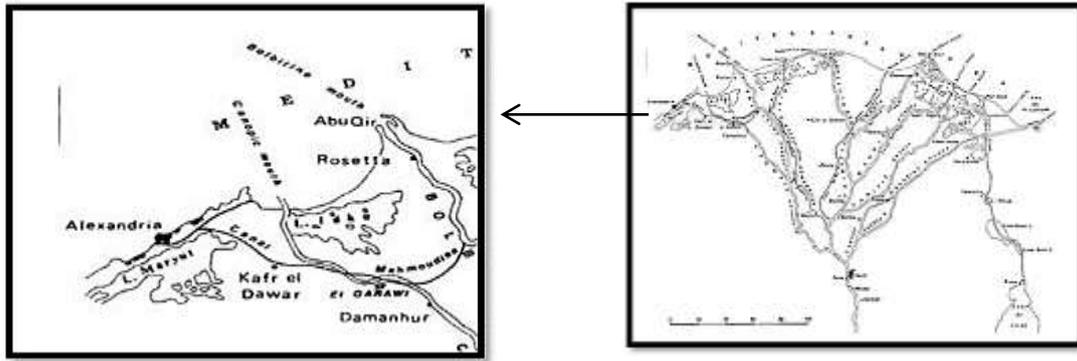


**Fig.(5):**Festivals boats in the Palestrina mosaic  
After. (أحمد، ٢٠١٠، شكل ٦، ٢١)

Paolo Gallo thought that what was depicted in the mosaic represented Canopus (Gallo, 2001,13; Burkhalter,F.,1999,234) but Enayat Muhammad thought that this mosaic does not, but it is Luxor (أحمد، ٢٠١٠، ٢٦) and perhaps from the view of the researcher that it is not one integrated mosaic, but it appeared to be parts that contain a group of scenes showing a group of boats, some of which can be considered war boats, some of which are fishing and others have a cabin (fig:5), which can be considered as boats for hiking and celebration, and perhaps the view does not represent Canopus, but one of the scenes contain a celebration similar to what was happening in Canopus.

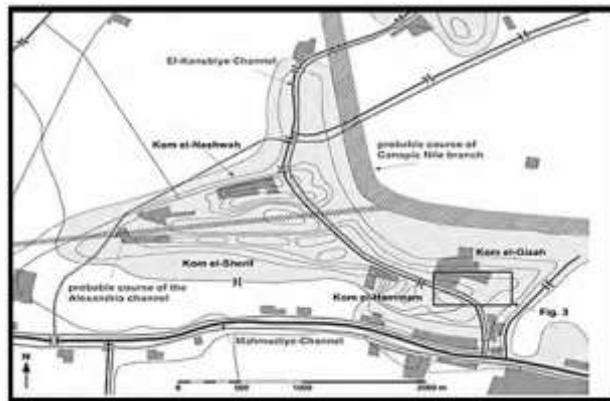
### 3. The River Connection between Alexandria and Canopus

The Nile was the main water body that affected most aspects of life in Egypt. According to the Historians, the Canopic Branch was the widest and the most important branch within the internal transport system. This was the westernmost of the Nile Delta distributaries that flowed into the bay of Canopus (Fig.6) (Khalil, 2008, 33). The Canopic Branch (Fig:7) of the Nile bifurcated at the head of the Delta and took a westerly route, passing by a number of towns and settlements until it reached the town and harbour of Schedia (present Kom ElGiza) south-east of Alexandria. (Bergmann & Heinzelmänn 2005)



**Fig.(6):**The Nile Delta and branches based on Strabo's account

After: (Khalil, 2008, 34, Fig.1)



**Fig.(7):** The Canopic Branch

After: (Bergmann & Heinzelmann 2005, Fig:1,p.11).

Here it split into two ways, the main one continuing to Canopus where it discharged, while the secondary way formed what was known as the Schedia Canal, and which flowed towards Alexandria in the north-west. This canal (Fig.8) was to play an important role in riverine transport to and from the city during the Hellenistic and Roman periods. It subsequently silted up gradually during the 5th century AD and stopped flowing into the Canopic Bay before the Arabs reached Alexandria in the 7<sup>th</sup> AD (Khalil, 2008, 34).



**Fig.(8):**A map of Alexandria by M. Al- Falaki (1866) based on Strabo's description and the survey that Al-Falaki conducted in the city. Note the suggested course of Schedia Canal. After: After: (Khalil, 2008, 35, Fig.2)

The first person to mention the name of Scidia was the historian Strabo when he spoke in his geography about Scidia and its path, and the countries and suburbs that passed through it in the past (Strabo XVII,I.17). Strabo mentioned it when he referred to the Scidia canal, which was supplying the city of newly built Alexandria with fresh water. Strabo saying: "On passing through the Canobic gate of the city, on the right hand is the canal leading to Canobus, close to the lake. They sail by this canal to Schedia, to the great river, and to Canobus, but the first place at which they arrive is Eleusis" (الفلكي، ١٩٦٦، ١٤٨؛ Strabo XVII.1.17).

The Schedia Canal, also known as the canal of Alexandria (Empereur,1998, 130-131) and was also called the river and the Gulf of Alexandria as well as, Skidia, Kesaa' and shtayar (الفلكي، ١٩٦٦، ١٥١). The word " Scidia " means the ferry or bridge, in addition to what it means for the name of a place, and this is clear from the text that Strabo mentioned in his geography when talking about Scidia and its translation: " For this purpose a bridge of boats is laid across the river, and from this kind of bridge the place has the name of Schedia." (Strabo XVII.1.17).

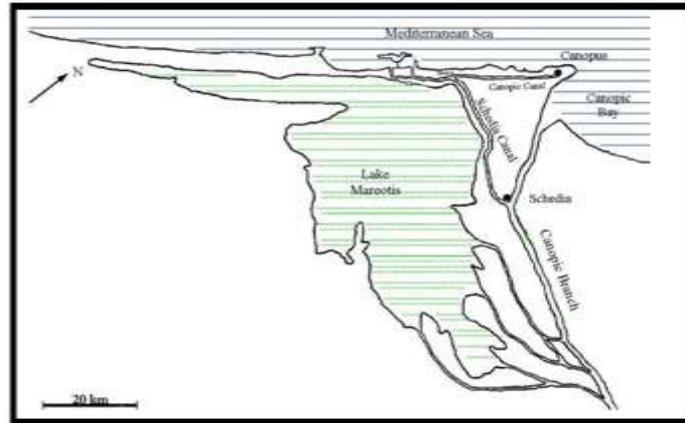
There were many opinions about the date of the beginning of the digging of the Canal of Scidia, and some think that the Canal of Scidia existed before the establishment of the city of Alexandria and before it was called Scidia in the site Raquda (Rakotis), which was supplied with fresh water through a canal that extends west from the Canopic branch of the Nile at a site called Scidia, i.e. the ferry (حسين، ١٩٦٣، ١٧). Others believe that the canal was dug in conjunction with the establishment of the city of Alexandria and because it was far away, it dug a canal from Chereu to the city (الفلكي، ١٩٦٦، ١٤٩), Al-Falaki said that the digging of the canal of Alexandria was inevitably done after the establishment of the city because its existence depended on it, and recording to this Scidia canal was excavated to Alexandria as the first canal for Alexandria since its establishment in 331 BC. (طوسون، ٢٠١٢، ١٠).

As for the path of the Scidia Canal, it is clear from what was stated in the writings of some historians, as the first mention of it was in the geography of Strabo and what was stated in it shows the beginning of the path of Scidia canal and its name explicitly starting from the city of Alexandria to the Canopic branch passing through (Eleusis) (currently Al Hadara in Alexandria), where it was explained that as soon as it left the city of Alexandria through the Canopic gate, it is found on the right of the canal that is heading towards Canopy, then the canal branches at Petrai (currently Hagar Al Nawateya) to two branches, one of which is Canopy and the other to Scidia on the Canopic branch. (Lindsay 1968, 127; حسين، ١٩٦٣، ١٨).

Through an analysis with Strabo about the Scidia Canal and its path, it can be said that the Scidia Canal begins its path from Alexandria passing through the Canopic gate and then goes to the southeast passing through the suburb of Eleusis and from there to the city of Scidia on the Canopic branch of the Nile where its estuary is located and this is where the city of scidia takes its water from. It was also mentioned that the distance from Scidia to Alexandria is four schoenes, which is equivalent to 28 kilometers (الفلكي، ١٩٦٦، ١٤٨).

Al Falaki says that this canal used to be called River and its water came from the Canopic branch of the Nile (Fig:9) and poured into the port of Eunostos, as it is now, and the canal is bent when it leaves the old city 'Alexandria' and goes south of Eleusis (El- Nozha), which is almost parallel to the walls surrounding ancient Alexandria, and at the Eleusis (currently Al Hadara), the canal is a curvature passing around part of this suburb and then goes towards the heights south-east of Nicopolis, and there are two branches "the main branch" that are approaching a right angle and then goes to the southeast towards the ruins of Creon (Kareoune), and the other branch continues its direction to the mountainside of the small chain of mountains and goes to Canopus. The main branch was previously called Scidia canal, which is the same way of parts of Mahmoudia Canal now, and thus man cannot doubt that a large part of its current Mahmoudia canal is

occupying the same old place as the Scidia canal from the village to Alexandria (الفلكى، ١٩٦٦، 147).



**Fig.(9):**The Schedia canal bifurcated from the Canopic Branch and flowed towards Alexandria.  
After: (Khalil, 2008, 36, Fig.3)

So it is possible to conclude that Scidia canal, as stated in the writings of historians Strabo, even the modern ones, started from Scidia, which is located on the ancient canopic branch, and then continues to the west of Scidia, and it goes north until it passes south to the suburb of Eleusis, along the walls surrounding Alexandria, and the way of this canal, which is the same as the path of its current Mahmoudiyah, except for a few minor differences (الفلكى، ١٩٦٦، (١٤٧)). As for the location of the city of Scidia according to what Strabo said that it is located to the south of the city of Canopus and to the east (slightly tilted to the south) of the Eleusis, and it is also located to the southeast of the city of Alexandria, 27 kilometers away (الفلكى (١٤٩، ١٩٦٦،).

As for the importance of the old Scidia, Strabo mentioned it in his geography, starting from its location on the eastern and western Canopic branch, where it was linked its two parts by a light bridge that resembles the ferries, which has its name from it (Strabo 17.1.16.). Scidia also included a river port where river ships meet, where the travellers take it to Upper Egypt, and it was established the customs of imported and exported goods from Upper Egypt and all of Egypt. (Haas,1997, 365, n. 13)

Scidia port had great importance as well as Scidia canal. The prosperity of Alexandria city was closely linked to the extent of the Egyptian rulers' interest in the development of this canal. The port of Scidia remained an important port inside the delta on the Canopic branch, where large ships carrying wheat were docked from Upper Egypt and central Egypt. Even Emperor Trajan had ordered the construction of a grain warehouses to accommodate those ships that transported grains from Upper Egypt to the port of Scidia, from which small ships sail directly inside the Scidia branch to Alexandria. (الفلكى، ١٩٦٦، (١٤٨).

Most of the visitors to Canopus were coming from Alexandria. (Ammianus Marcellinus XXII.16) As for the distance of the trip between Canopus and Alexandria, Strabo says: "*When Alexandrian leaves the beginning of Canopus, you notice on the right the waters of the Canal, which follow the borders of the lake in the direction of Canopus, through the penetration of Eleusis, which is the name of a suburb close to Alexandria, located on the bank of the Canopic Canal and filled with restrooms used by travelers, men and women, who want to celebrate Feast there : Here is the Canopian beginning, especially the famous area of debauchery as it was known.* (Strabo XVII,I.17).

## 4. Canopus City Festivities

Canopus flourished under the rule of the Ptolemies. Temples and feasts were flourished. The large number of holidays and festivals in the cities of Canopus and Menouthis were considered as means of attracting many Egyptian and foreign tourists who found pleasure through these holidays and recreational celebrations, even if their essence was religious. So it seems that Canopus became a favourite pleasure city for the visitors. (أحمد، ٢٠١٠، ٢٤٤) The reason could be related to its mild weather which was described by the historian Ammianus Marcellinus, as he said: "*This city has many interesting stories. The weather there is fine and the temperature is mild. Those who stayed in it, felt as if they were taken outside the world*"

### 4.1. Celebrations of the God Osiris in Canopus

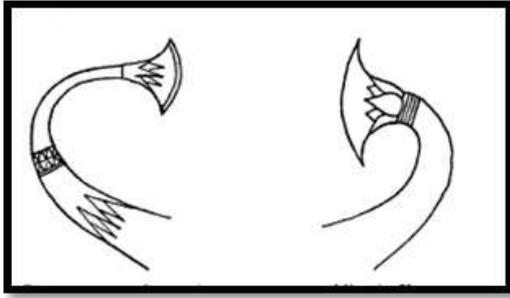
The god Osiris was worshiped in Canopus in the form of Osiris Canopus and occupied a great position. It was found a famous temple of the god Osiris in Canopus, dating to the reign of King Ptolemy III Euergetes and his wife Berenice (Gleerup, 1960, 12). The sacred ship of Osiris "ἱερόν π. τοῦ Ὀσερίου" (OGI 56.51) is mentioned in an inscription which dates back to the third century BC and was uncovered at Canopus (Abdelwahed, 2016, 3). Every year on the 29th day of the month of Khoiak, the sacred ship of Osiris sails from Heraclium to the temple of Osiris in Canopus through the Canopic Canal (Wilkinson, 1943, 177; حسنى، ٢٠٠٥، ٥٩). Egyptians participated in this festival and their participation did not mean that the festival represented only the Egyptian cultural identity but was for all worshippers of god, regardless of their ethnic identities (Plutarch, 66). The majestic procession was also attended by a large number of priests, foreigners, Egyptians, dancers, singers, musicians and drummers. The participants made various sacrifices of geese and bulls that embody the god (أحمد، ٢٠١٠، ٢٤٤).

#### 4.1.1. Shapes of the Sacred Ship of Osiris

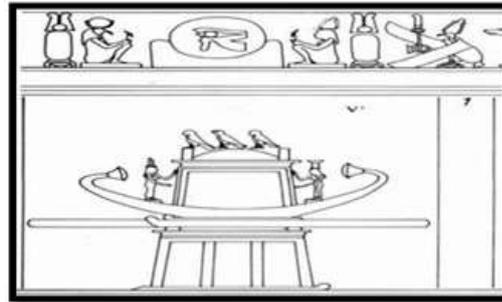
Ancient Egyptian gods had also full-sized barks – which were similar in shape to Nile boats, except that their prows (JÉQUIER, 1922, 165) and sterns (JÉQUIER, 1922, 51) were adorned with the aegis of the god in question, and the cabin was replaced by a naos containing the cult image of the deity in which to travel by river or canal (Erman, 1985, 373; Abdel-Raziq, 2011, 1).

Notably, numerous gods possessed sacred barks with image and shrine were termed *sšm ḥw* (var. *sšm n ḥw*) 'protected image' (Hannig, 1995, 765) and often described as 'uplifting the beauty' (*wṯs nfrw*) of a deity, or "the one who raises on high the beauty (of the god)" that is the one who instills the god with new life. A number of sacred barks bear ceremonial names and are known from descriptions or reproductions. A famous one is the *nšm.t* –bark of Osiris, which played a prominent part in the celebration of the Osiris mysteries (Abdel-Raziq, 2011, 2).

Shapes of the sacred barks of Osiris were recognized through representing the boats of the god Osiris used in the Khoiak ritual which represented on the walls of the Egyptian temples. The symbols depicted on the prows and sterns of the boat of Osiris god were differed. These boats sometimes had the prows and sterns of the papyrus and lotus flowers (fig:10 A, b) (Cauville, 1997, 6). Other times, its prow is decorated with a figurehead of the god emerging from a lotus stem (Fig: 11), while the reliquary of Osiris protrudes from the top of the cabin shrine. This bark was personified as a goddess, and enjoyed cultic honors (Cauville, 1997, 88; JÉQUIER, 1922, 166).



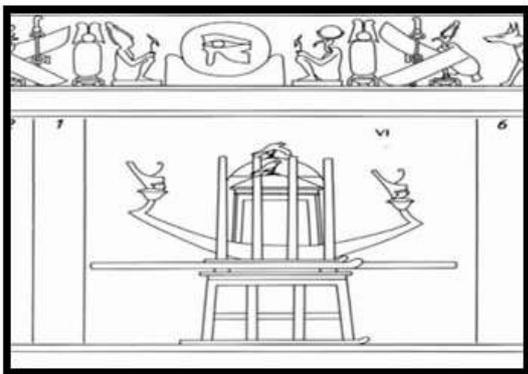
**Fig.(10A):**Sacred bark with Lotus prow and stern  
After:(Cauville, 1997)



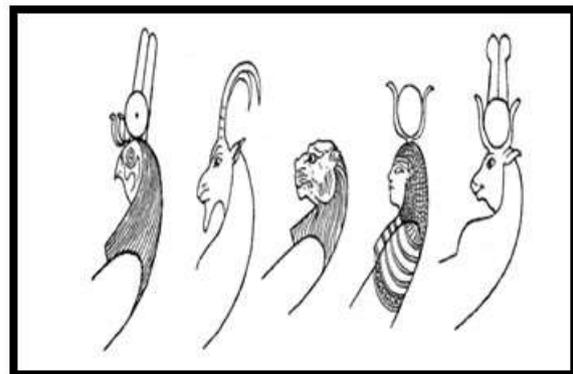
**Fig.(10B):**Osiris boat with papyrus prow and stern  
at Dendera temple

After: JÉQUIER, 1922, 165, ig.107.

Sometimes the prows and sterns were depicted in the form of a snake. The top of the paddles is decorated with the head of a Falcon to protect the boat (Fig.12). In the middle of the hull of the ship there is a god chapel (the body of the deceased Osiris rests on it), and the falcons were on top of it to protect it. It was with masts that were decorated by papyrus at the top of it, and on the rear of the boat sometimes the god Horus was depicted as a guide for the boat. In some scenes, appeared the two protecting goddesses Isis and Nephthys lift one of their arms towards the boat to protect it and carry with their other arms the sign of life Ankh. Sometimes the two goddesses Satet and Anuket were depicted because of their connection to the flood and thus their association with the resurrection of Osiris. (Cauville, 1997,6)



**Fig.(11):** Boat with floral prow and stern emerging  
from them Human head, representing the god  
Osiris After:(Cauville, 1997)



**Fig.(12):** Sacred boats with gods heads edges After:(  
JÉQUIER , 1922, 166, Fig.109)

#### 4.2. Celebrations of the God Serapis in Canopus

During the Ptolemaic Period, Canopus was also one of the most important religious centers in Egypt. The fame of its gods, who are able to heal the sick, and the importance of its sanctuaries, which is dedicated to the worship of the royal family, and because it is very close to the capital and the purity of its air and means of enjoyment, Canopus has become the ideal place for rest and enjoyment for the aristocracy in Alexandria (Breccia 1926,14,47-50).Canopus is also famous for the temple of the god Serapis, which is honored with great reverence and effects such cures that even the most reputable men believe in it and sleep in it, and the reason for his popular reputation is the interest in spiritual care, so pilgrims came from all over the world in search of healing (Strabo XVII,1.17).

Strabo talked about this temple, saying: *“you will find In Canopus a temple of Serapis, which people glorify, and many religious rituals are held there, persons even of the highest rank confide in them, and sleep there themselves on their own account, or others for them. Some persons record the cures and others the veracity of the oracles which are delivered there. But remarkable above everything else is the multitude of persons who resort to the public festivals, and come from Alexandria by the canal. For day and night there are crowds of men and women in boats, singing and dancing, without restraint, and with the utmost licentiousness. Others, at Canopus itself, keep hostelrys situated on the banks of the canal, which are well adapted for such kind of diversion and revelry”* (Strabo XVII,I,17; الفلكي، ١٥٣،١٩٦٦).

Strabo has referred in this paragraph to the existence of a temple of Serapis in Canopus, and he thought that it has the ability to cure diseases, where he knew the god Serapis as a god of healing from the early period of his appearance. (Castiglione, L.,1971, 37) He had the ability to cure patients. The patient was offering the prayer of god to give him a complete healing from the disease (Fraser,1972,257). Serapis had the amazing power to cure patients. He was curing patients through oracle while the patient slept in his temple. He was appearing to the sleeper and he was curing from his illness and prescribing medicine. Therefore, the temple of Serapis in Canopus had great touristic importance as a place of healing, where patients or those seeking to cure through dreams or as known as incubation. (Milne,1916, 77)

Dreams were a distinctive moment of divine contact, where the gods could convey their desires and support through dreams. Dreams were part of the divine oracle, it's a moment in which the mind would be rid of the physical relationship of life and would become more transparent and connected to the divine world, and more capable of receiving the divine messages. Where the gods can appear directly to the sleeping patients in the temple in different forms and deliver them different messages directly in a symbolic way. (Dunand,2006; Fraser,1972,257).

As the moment of dreaming for the sleeper was a special moment to contact with the god, this led to the idea of Incubation, which is consulting the god to get advice through dreams (intentional dreams) that the worshipper here was going to the temple to seeking advice and help from god and then sleeping in the temple in the hope of obtaining god's help through dreams. It is clear that this phenomenon has witnessed a spread not only between private but also among the public. The priests talked to the patient during the day about the symptoms and in the morning they asked him about the dreams he had seen and they convinced him that god visited them at night and gave them medicine and this is done by another group of priests called the group of interpreters (Renberg,2010,649-662).

The union of the god Serapis with the goddess Isis, made him related to some of her attributes such as its secrets (Fraser,1972,256). The Greeks, like the Egyptians, were accustomed to mysterious religions full of secrets. Hence, the god Serapis was a god of secrets, just as the goddess Isis, who was known as the goddess of healing since the Pharaonic period and continued to do so until the Roman period. Therefore, the god Serapis acquired this property from his wife, as he acquired the characteristics of the god Osiris, which included magic, so he was worshipped as a god of oracle (Castiglione,1971,33).

In early Roman time, pilgrims and travellers from Alexandria and elsewhere visited Canopus on public feast days. Excavations of the canal have also resulted in a large number of votive barques, lamps, apparently evidence of such celebrations (Goddio, Clauss, 2006,195-197; Abdelwahed, 2016,4). Although tourists go to the Temple of Serapis in all the seasons of the year, there are special holy days known as Panegyries, which is a public gathering in which worship used to take

the appearance of immorality. Strabo says: "*It is a surprising scene.*" He also says: "*The crowd of revelers who go down from Alexandria to Canopus through the canal to the public celebrations, festivals for every day, days of praise and every night is crowded with people on boats, who play the flute and dance a lot without restraint and with extreme licentiousness, both men and women, and also with the people of Canopus itself, who have resorts situated close to the canal and adapted to relaxation and merry-making of this kind.*" Here is the contribution of Scidia canal to the transportation of tourists, whether asking for pleasure or asking for recovery during the religious ceremonies that were held in honor of both the god Serapis and the goddess Isis. (Strabo, Geogr. XVII, 1, 17).

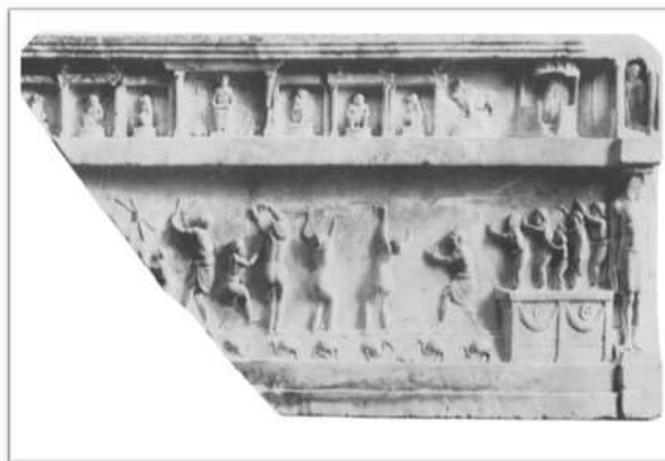
As for the celebrations that used to take place at night, the torches were used and the holiday was spent in a variety of interesting forms (Achilles Tattius 5.2). Those who understand well appreciate the cookies made in Canopus, as well as there are certain types of fish, such as the type of Tenia which was very desirable and types of marine shellfish, especially the type of Tellines . it is said that there are other types called Royal, which are smaller, lighter and easier to cook, as well as very nutritious (حسنی، ٧٤، ٢٠٠٥). The wine was shed and the dried fruit was used and the palm branches were distributed (Abdelwahed, 2016,8).

Thus, the feast of the god Serapis was an elaborate carnival to which dancers, trumpetists, comedians, musicians and pilgrims came (Abdelwahed, 2016,9). These features, which Strabo pointed out depicted in a huge frieze found in Ariccia near Rome. It is preserved at the National Museum in Rome under the number 77255 (Roullet, 1972, 28), which showing festival accompanied with religious ritual which also accompanied by a dance performance from a group of women. According to Paribeni, a dance in which the dancers and spectators are undoubtedly Africans, i.e. Egyptians and Negroes, Paribeni pointed out that this frieze represents a ceremony on the occasion of some of the festivals of Isis and Serapis at the temple of Canopus (Paribeni, 1919.; Lewis, 1983, 233).

#### 4.2.1 Festivities Frieze of Serapis and Isis at the Temple of Canopus

##### 4.2.1.1 Description of the Frieze

The frieze (Fig:13) are divided into two unequal parts, the upper part of which is the smallest area, which in turn is divided into several sections of niches, the number of which is seven niches, which take the appearance of the entrances to the temples, which allows us to call it naiskos, and the representative inside it are different figures, some of which are related to the ancient Egyptian religion and others to the mythological religious figures who are unclear (Roullet, 1972, 28).



**Fig.(13):**Frieze depicted the festival of Serapis and Isis at the Temple of Canopus  
After:(Lewis,1983,23323,pl.4)

To the right of this frieze a bearded man is depicted in a square cabin, who the researchers thought that he is Serapis because of the shape of the beard and hair, followed him on the right side an entrance of a temple with a vaulted roof made of a palm leaves, in the middle of the entrance depicted a woman in frontal position who lacks the attributes of gods. However, due to her proximity to Serapis, it is believed that she represents Isis (Lewis,1983,233), followed her a statue of the Apis Bull. To the right side of it, there are three niches, in the middle one depicted the god Bes and on his both sides there are two baboons, followed by a wide niche, also in the form of a temple façade, in the middle of it sitting an unclear features woman.

At the end of the frieze, there are three niches that repeats the same niches mentioned before (Roulet,1972,28). The lower part of the frieze, which is the widest area, on its right side a depiction of one of the men of the telamones who is in his usual form raising the ceiling of the niche(Roulet,1972,28), In the right-hand corner of the scene is a small quadrangular podium on which six who have represented raising their hands as a welcome sign of what is going on in front of them (Lewis,1983,233) and looking towards the central figures in a transport of enthusiasm and accompany their dancing movement with a rhythmical clapping of their hands.

As for the main view of the frieze, it represented by a religious ritualistic dance performed by Negro women who appear from their backs that they have worn long transparent tunics that reveal the details of their bodies, and their violent dance is appearing in the bending of the knees and tossing back the head (Paribeni,1919,106-112; Leclant,1949,99-100) while raising their hands up and accompanying their movement a rhythmic claps with their hands (Snowden,1956,115; Leclant,1949,100), one of them on the right, which looks like she is holding the crotala and the set of finger cymbals (Lewis,1983,233). This ritual dance was performed by a group of dancers in front of the gods sitting in the upper part, which are represented in various chapels (Roulet,1972,28).

The dancers are negro women and a little man with negro features is depicted on their left (Snowden,1956,115). The viewers were Egyptians. The shape of the garlands and the Telamones dated back to the second half of the first century, and to confirm the artistic environment that the artist wanted to refer to it (Lewis,1983,233), he depicted below the dancing group of ibis, the symbols associated with the goddess Isis, which is linked to the Egyptian environment in the Roman art (Roulet,1972,28).

#### **4.2.1.2 Analytical study of the Frieze**

The main scene in this frieze depicting a group of negro women who played a major role in the spread of the worship of the goddess Isis by discovering a representation of negroes in the ritual of the goddess Isis. Archaeological evidence suggests that Isis's ritual is sometimes associated with Ethiopians and Egyptians (Apul., Met, 11, 5). Since the worship of Isis was important to the Ethiopians Whether in Egypt or in their native land, those who, for various reasons, had settled elsewhere would often tend to continue their interest in the cult (Snowden, 1956,114).

As for the importance of religious dance and sacred songs with different musical instruments in this frieze, it points to the need for beginners to learn the origins of Isis worship through rhythmic movements (Snowden, 1956,116), as this ritual dance was part of the secret worship of Isis.

As for the musical instruments used, they were considered as the most important musical instruments attributed to women. It is used in religious rituals. It was called Crotala, a type of clappers distinguished by Clement from the finger cymbal. The Crotala instrument was also used during the secret celebrations of the goddess Isis. As for the finger cymbals, it was used by dancers in Egypt in the Ptolemaic and Roman periods.( Clement of Alexandria,4,192).

As for the depiction of the Ibis, it is the symbol of the god Thoth, who is one of the oldest gods of medicine and had a great role in medical treatments( Bleeker,1973,133) as well as people belief in his ability to protect from the dangers surrounding them such as diseases and in the Greek period, the Greek thought him similar to their god of medicine and he was worshipped in his animal form and he is a bird Ibis as a god of healing and fertility and was celebrated as one of the important holidays and celebrations of sick people and therefore it is likely that Ibis's depiction reflected on the healing nature of the place (Bleeker,1973,197).

We find in this frieze the portrayal of the god Bes, but he is one of the most famous and popular Egyptian gods, and he is an Egyptian god of foreign origin, perhaps from Nubia, and this is confirmed by his thick features and the big tongue coming out of his mouth in a funny form and the short and arched legs and so his representation was linked to the negro female dancers and dwarf who accompanied them. It is usually portrayed with animals such as Ibis, and Bes was considered as a god of music, and his healing abilities are strengthened through the musical instruments that he carries with him, such as tambourine, flute and lute (Altenmüller,1979, col.722). Bes was somehow connected to the worship of Apis and this is evident in the Temple of Nectnabo I in Serapium in Memphis. It was discovered in Memphis a small statues of the god Bes holding a chapel on his head represented by the shape of the head of the holy bull of Memphis. He was the god of Punt land and the Eastern Territories, Mariette refer to the god Bes association with the Greek god, Dionysus. As it is the living image of Osiris in the Greek-Roman period. Therefore, It appeared the association of the god Bes from Nubia with the Egyptian bull (Mariette, Maspero,1882,17).

## **5.Conclusion**

The relationship between the Scidia Canal and the city of Alexandria remained from the Ptolemaic period until the Fatimid time, and the relationship between them was based on a common interest in which the Scidia Canal played a large share, and it was one of the main factors that linked Alexandria, Scidia and the rest of Egypt. The Scidia Canal had a great touristic role during the Greek and Roman periods, through boat tourism, "river tourism", recreational tourism, and religious tourism. The various feasts and festivals in the cities of Canopus and Menouthis were a means of attracting many Egyptian and foreign tourists who were enjoying them. Osiris' sacred journey in the month of Khoiak, from Heraclium to Osiris Temple in Canopus, through the Canopic Canal, was a pattern of religious and boat tourism. During the Ptolemaic era, Canopus was also one of the most important religious centers. It became famous for the temple of the god Serapis, which was associated with the miracle of healing the sick. This played a major role in attracting tourists to attend religious rituals and participate in pilgrims from all over the world. The Temple of Serapis in Canopus attracted tourists in all the seasons of the year and not only in the sacred days that know Panegyries, i.e. praise, as the feast of the god Serapis took the form of an elaborate carnival to which dancers, trumpeters, comedians, musicians and pilgrims came from everywhere.

The proximity of Canopus to the capital and the purity of its air and the multiplicity of pleasures in it made it the ideal place to rest and enjoy the aristocracy of Alexandria. The water carnival was held during the festivities, which was a tourist attraction. The Scidia Canal also played a part in the celebrations in the Menouthis area, where the rituals were unrestricted and liberated. The Nile boats used in river tourism continued to appear in the late

and early Ptolemaic period in the same forms and with the same uses as previous times, as the boats used in the Ptolemaic era were only an evolution of ancient Egyptian models. The Nile boats were characterized by the height of both the front and rear of the ship, and the front of the boats took plant and animal forms with religious connections, as was prevalent in the models of that stage.

To revive the heritage of Canopus and Menouthis regions, the researcher proposes to establish a tourist project "A tourist, recreational, and economic complex" in the city of Alexandria that bears the characteristics of panoramic halls to watch and display water carnivals, religious and recreational festivals, and the crossing of pilgrim boats through the Scidia canal, as well as the presentation of discovered archaeological pieces. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct an extensive study on modern technologies such as virtual reality spectacles (VR), which enabled us to watch religious rituals and ceremonies in a realistic form, and this will enable the tourist currently to keep up with the old events in a realistic form.

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## الدور السياحي لقناة شيديا في العصرين اليوناني والروماني

ملخص البحث	معلومات المقال
	الكلمات الدالة:
ساهمت قناة شيديا في نقل السياح إلى كانوب أثناء الأحتفالات الدينية التي كانت تقام على شرف المعبود سيرابيس والمعبودة إيزيس خلال العصرين اليوناني والروماني، فكان الكرنفال المائي المستمر على القناة إلى كانوب يجذب السائحين إليه.	قناة شيديا سياحة كانوب احتفالات
إن الفرع الذي يخرج من قناة شيديا على بعد ثلاثة كيلومترات ونصف كيلو متر من اليوزيس ، كان يتجه حتى كانوب على جانب المرتفع الضيق التي تقع عليه الإسكندرية وأبو قير ، ولم يعد يوجد الآن أي أثر لهذا الفرع ، ومع هذا فقد أكتشفت على طول المرتفع الضيق بعض بقايا من قناة هائلة تحت الارض ، إذن فإن الفرع الكانوبي للترعة كان قد تحول منذ زمن بعيداً إلى قناة جوفية تحمل الماء العذب إلى كانوب ، شهادة سترابون لاتدع أي شك في وجود ترعة بين الاسكندرية وكانوب.	
أما عن المسار الكانوبي لفرعة الترعة فكان يصل حتى كانوب في اتجاه مواز للشاطئ ابتداء من فاروس حتى المصب الكانوبي ، و وفقاً لوصف سترابون كان هناك معبداً للإله سرابيس في هذه المدينة و كان يذهب أهل الإسكندرية بطريق الترعة.	
تتناول هذه الورقة البحثية دور قناة شيديا السياحي لمدينة كانوب ومينوتس خلال العصرين اليوناني الروماني . كما تستعرض هذه الدراسة الدور السياحي للقناة المتمثل في السياحة النيلية وكذلك السياحة الدينية من خلال تناولها للأحتفالات والطقوس الدينية المقامة في معابد كانوب ومينوتس ، وتلقى هذه الدراسة الضوء على السياحة الترفيهية والكرنفال المائي المقام أثناء الأحتفالات والذي كان نقطة جذب للسائحين سواء أكانوا من مدينة الإسكندرية أو غيرها . وتعتمد هذه الدراسة في تناولها للموضوع على أقوال المؤرخين والرحالة والبرديات وتدلل بالأدلة الفنية .	